The Washington Monthly

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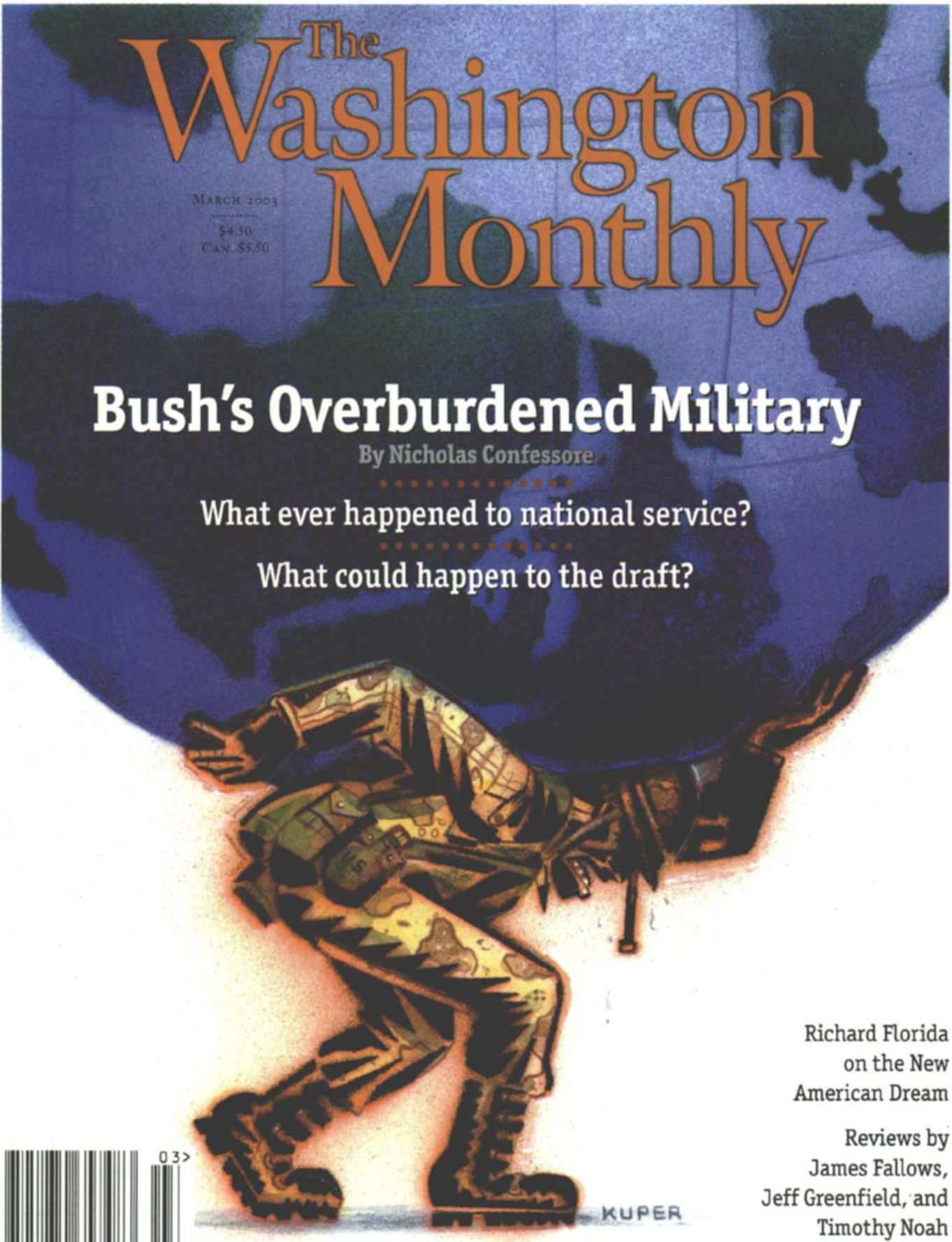
Bush's Overburdened Military

By Nicholas Confessore

What ever happened to national service?

What could happen to the draft?



Richard Florida on the New American Dream

Reviews by James Fallows, Jeff Greenfield, and Timothy Noah

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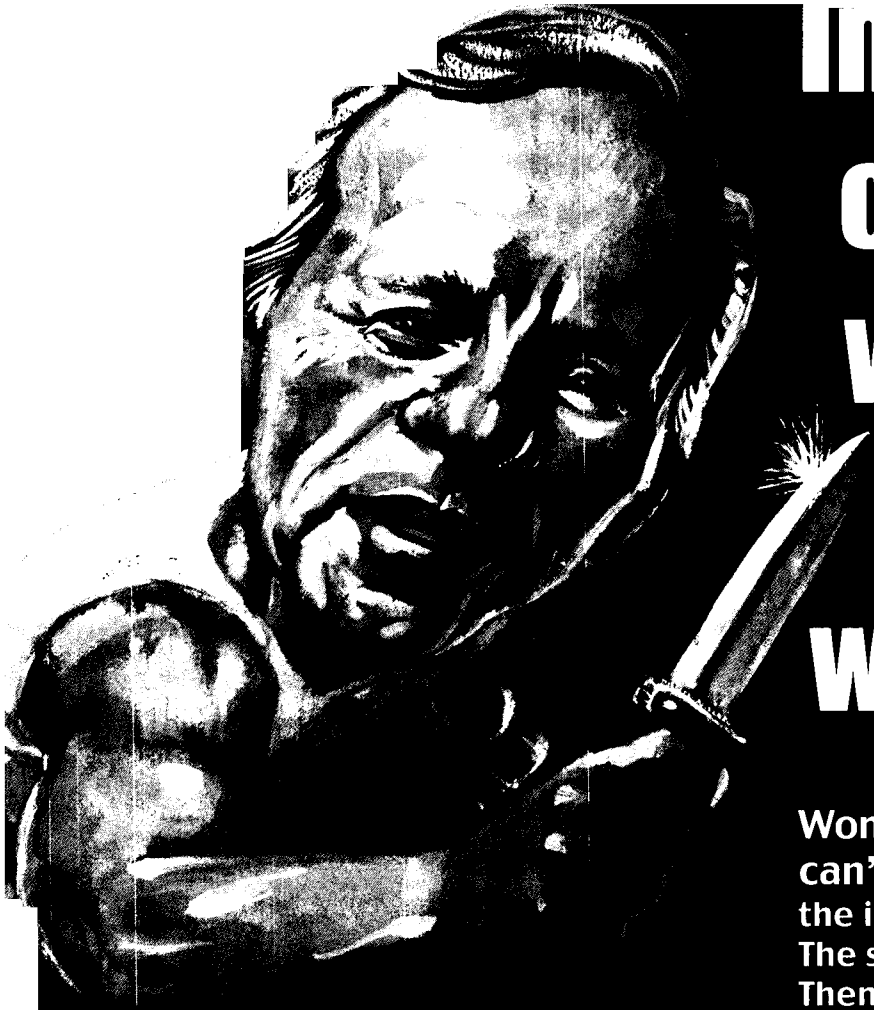

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Letters

It's the Policy, Stupid

Nina Teicholz's "Privatizing Propaganda" (December) inadvertently, but accurately, illustrates the massive flaw in the Bush administration's efforts to win Arab and Muslim hearts and minds. She cites "a fundamental lack of concern about how the world views America," but then purports to show the bright side: the founding, with big-name support, of a non-government, nonprofit organization to produce TV programs for broadcast in the Middle East. Its goal, we're told, is "to show Arabs and Muslims how Americans live, breathe, and work in the U.S.—warts and all."

But Arabs and Muslims already know that. Thousands have gone to school here (before 9/11 at least), and millions are fans of U.S. movies and TV shows. Familiarity with American life isn't the problem. With all due respect, "it's the policy, stupid." Somehow Ms. Teicholz managed to write an entire article on this crucial subject without even a passing reference to the elephant in the living room: U.S. support for Israel's continued military occupation of Palestine, its illegal settlements and its denial of human rights. Until our government assumes an active and even-handed role in ending that tragic conflict, we'll still be the bad guys.

BARBARA HADDAD RYAN
Alexandria, Va.

Car Talk

Stephanie Mencimer's otherwise excellent review of Keith Bradsher's new book *High and Mighty: SUVs* ("Bumper Mentality," December) was unfortunately marred by the false assertion that most SUV customers are affluent, and often socially liberal, baby boomers. In fact, automakers know—and their marketing efforts reflect—that the biggest consumers of the biggest SUVs (Lincoln Navigator, Ford Excursion, Cadillac Escalade, etc.) are affluent conservatives. As Bradsher points out, large SUVs are also favorites with law enforcement agencies, fire departments, and other groups that could easily function with minivans—and could hardly be labeled as socially liberal.

WILSON HUBBELL
Santa Barbara, Calif.

An otherwise great article slips badly when it reinforces the tired stereotype about why SUVs aren't popular in Japan: "Cultural checks that emphasize the good of the community over that of the individual." Nice try! Japanese are just as selfish as people anywhere else. The reason SUVs haven't caught on, just like most large American cars never catch on here: The roads are too narrow. Good luck trying to maneuver an SUV down the maze of side roads in any Japanese city.

LARRY WIEBE
Tokyo, Japan

Three cheers from up north, where SUVs aren't quite as popular—save for Alberta, our most Americanized and insecure province. I (carefully) drove my non-ego-inflating Ford Tempo in that province for several years, always checking around me for the arrogant—and usually incompetent—drivers who massaged their tiny self-esteem in these portable kill vehicles. Perhaps Canada suffers as a nation from a bit of the "soccer-mom" complex, but this, after all, is not such a bad thing. My compliments (and thanks) for placing this story into the public discourse where it belongs.

TOM PENNER
Winnipeg, Canada

Your article "Bumper Mentality" was completely offensive and inaccurate. I own a Jeep and was hit on two different occasions by reckless, speeding Washington, D.C., drivers. In both instances, I sustained $200 worth of damage to my bumpers, while the other vehicles sustained $7,000 and $4,500 respectively. Each time the police said to me, "Your car is a testament to the safety of Jeeps." My SUV experiences have resulted in saved lives, lower costs for repair, and overall lower maintenance costs (they are very sturdy and require very little). Sure, what I save there goes into high fuel costs, but I only drive six miles round trip to work each day.

In my experiences, SUV drivers tend to speed less, are more cautious and accommodating. I see fewer SUVs in accidents than other cars.

PATRICIA BLAIS
via email

While Ms. Mencimer says that the typical SUV driver "invariably" buys the vehicle for the safety of their kids, I'd argue that most buy them for their flexible utility. They're not as hard to park as a pickup truck; they're flexible enough to load purchases from the hardware store; and they're great if you have dogs. I have no kids and two dogs, and my SUV was great for the weekend mountain treks when I lived in Washington State. I now live in Houston, so I probably do visit more fine restaurants than off-road trails these days. It's still a great vehicle for the dogs and frequent trips to the hardware store (I'm remodeling).

The real culprit here are suburbanites. People move to the middle of nowhere where they have to drive miles to reach anything. In turn, they clog up the roads which forces taxpayers like me to subsidize their roadway expansions. My property taxes end up supporting their lifestyle and doing little for the inner city.

KEITH HALL
Houston, Texas

Snipers With Pens

Bravo to Paul Glastris for "How the Democrats Could Have Won" (December)! Finally, a journalist has done more than just observe and rant—he's offered some ideas. I couldn't have been in more agreement than when he made the analogy: "Journalists have the moral courage of snipers." If only more of the media would share their ideas, their readers may reach a deeper understanding of the issues.

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TRAVIS GALILEO
via email

Paul Glastris's "How the Democrats Could Have Won" contains an unfortunate piece of revisionist history regarding the 1996 welfare-reform legislation. Contrary to Mr. Glastris's assertion, President Clinton was not able to get welfare and other social program benefits restored to most legal immigrants after the 1996 election. To this day, many legal immigrants remain ineligible for TANF, Medicaid, SSI, food stamps and many other federally-funded benefits. The president's compromising principles on this issue has led to long-term negative consequences for poor immigrants. We will never know whether he could have stood firm; won the election by 5 percent instead of 9 percent; and insisted on a bill for consistent with his principles after the election.

CHRIS LAMB
Legal Aid
via email

Paul Glastris replies: In fact, Clinton got most, though not all, of the benefits restored, including food stamps for 225,000 legal immigrants and health and disability benefits for 380,000, according to figures compiled by the Democratic Leadership Council.

Kudos for Krugman

Thanks for profiling Paul Krugman ("Comparative Advantage," December). He deserves even more attention than he is getting. In my opinion, the country could use about 10 more Paul Krugmans, writing about all aspects of George W. Bush's policies. Maybe he does cross some "red lines" set by other columnists, but by the standards of right-wing commentary, he still seems pretty tame. I don't think he's called Bush "Satan" yet, for example.

SCOTT PARRISH
Monterey, Calif.

Testing Bush

In response to Siobhan Gorman's "Tutor Restoration" (December): It is more optimistic than realistic to expect the systemic failure of the public education system to suddenly disappear at the stroke of the president's pen signing the No Child Left Behind Act. But within all this shouting for accountability, what is to happen to those kids still trapped in failing schools? A better question yet: What role can municipal and state leaders play in helping raise the achievement of those students who have been forgotten, undereducated, and systematically eliminated from opportunities we all demand of our government? Gorman's article touches on the need for accessibility and availability of supplemental services. These are truly the keys in the determination of true value and ultimate success of this provision. Far too many urban students are being given the "short end of the stick" when it comes to the quality of the services they can realistically obtain. Municipal and state leaders should take full advantage of their opportunity to take the lead in helping those children caught in this time gap: the gap between the attempts at competency and the real reformation in order to fulfill NCLB mandates and truly leave no child behind.

MICHAEL E. JORDAN
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Renouncing Titles

Would you headline an article about male soldiers with "War Dudes" or "War Guys"? If not, why would you use "War Dames"? The article is fair and balanced, so why have a demeaning title?

KATHERINE BURGER JOHNSON
Associate Archivist, University Archives and Records Center
University of Louisville
Louisville, Ky.

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Tilting at Windmills

BY CHARLES PETERS

George the Uncurious • Ein News Channel • Draft the Rich
Do Maids Really Make It? • The $41 Burger

HOW FICTITIOUS IS THE UPward mobility that is supposed to be part of the American dream? The subject was most recently raised by the movie *Maid in Manhattan*, in which Jennifer Lopez plays a hotel chambermaid who snares a rich, aristocratic politician portrayed by Ralph Fiennes. A few years ago in *Pretty Woman*, Julia Roberts played a prostitute—have you noticed that the PC term is now "sex worker"?—who gets the wealthy Richard Gere. The answer, according to Caryn James of *The New York Times*, is that upward mobility is mostly a fantasy. She cites the increasing wealth gap between rich and poor. I agree, both about the gap and the fantasy. I also think that there is another equally large gap between the meritocratic elite and the people who for one reason or another don't pass the tests that determine everything from who gets into the right nursery school to whether one passes through the certifying rituals of the Ivy League. Since those tests don't measure character, wisdom, or the actual ability to perform a job, they leave a disturbing number of good and talented people behind.

I'M FASCINATED, HOWEVER, BY the ways upward mobility is still possible. Physical beauty combined with an engaging personality still works for a lot of women and some men, especially if they encounter a Henry Higgins along the way. Skill in sports or the performing arts also smoothes the upward path.

Increasingly, however, people seem to look to luck in the form of winning the lottery or getting injured just enough to win a big lawsuit without suffering serious, permanent disability. I think this explains a lot about the growth of public support for and participation in legalized gambling—and for the public's lack of interest in tort reform that might cap damage awards. These are two ways the fantasy of upward mobility has begun to influence public policy. Another is that the people who think they will someday be rich themselves are less willing to support taxing the rich. David Brooks recently cited a survey showing that 40 percent of Americans think of themselves as either being among the top 1 percent of the nation's wealthy, or on their way to getting there. This means that the wealthy are able to protect their bounty by offering just enough crumbs of opportunity to the poor to keep the fantasy alive and to keep them from insisting on the right to a good education that more than anything else might make upward mobility a reality.

MOST ALARMING TO ME, IS HOW many people see becoming rich as a major goal of their lives. This has become embarrassingly obvious in the case of the women on the television show "Joe Millionaire," and the millions of other women who identify with them. But it has been increasingly true of Americans generally since I was a young man. I was fortunate enough to grow up thinking that the most important things in life were finding a woman you loved and work that you enjoyed, that made a contribution to society, and that you were proud of. I never made a lot of money, but I have been a happy man during most of my life. So have a good many of my friends who felt the same way. Some money is nice. But if you have a lot, as my father used to say, all that happens is that people want to marry you for the wrong reasons.

You don't have to own a Jaguar or Mercedes to have a good car. You don't have to own a mansion to have a nice home. You can see the same sights the rich do when traveling, you just can't go from Ritz to Ritz. As for food, you can pay $41 for the most expensive hamburger in New York at the Old Homestead, or you can choose the two that are rated best, one at DB Bistro Moderne for $29, still a bit pricey, but the other at the Union Square is $12.50, which is affordable at least now and then for most of us. And if your taste in hamburgers is as unsubtle as mine, you're perfectly happy with the two- or three-dollar variety most of the time. In other words, you don't have to be rich to enjoy.

BESIDES, WHY DO YOU WANT to join the rich guys' club anyway? Some, to be sure, are splendid fellows. But mostly they're greedy people with little regard for their duty to pay taxes or serve their country.

Consider the latter for a moment. This magazine has long campaigned for a military draft that would remedy the situation recently described by Rep. Charlie Rangel (D-N.Y.) in *The New York Times*: "A disproportionate number of the poor and members of minority groups make up the enlisted ranks of the military, while the most privileged Americans are underrepresented or absent." Even a recent Pentagon study reported that the

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wealthy are "not well-represented" in the military. It's not their lives at risk when their friend George W. Bush decides to go to war. I've been working on a book about 1940, the year the first peacetime draft was enacted. Its philosophy was stated in the preamble: "In a free society the obligations and privileges of military training and service should be shared generally."

DONALD RUMSFELD'S ARROGANT dismissal of Rangel's argument has been properly ridiculed elsewhere. But one of his objections did not receive attention: "If you think back when we had the draft, people were brought in and paid some fraction of what they could make in the civilian market." This is absurdly typical of the current administration and their fellow conservatives—they apply market rules to everything. In this case, using them as an excuse for not doing their duty.

For a fellow who is supposed to be so smart, Rumsfeld also betrayed a shocking ignorance of history when he said, "Big categories were exempted—people that were in college, people that were teaching, people that were married." All of these people served in World War II, and lots of them. I know because I was there and I knew them. Perhaps Rumsfeld was deliberately using the defects of the Vietnam draft to discredit conscription generally. In that case, instead of being ignorant, he was cynical. And the shot he took was dismayingly cheap. Until Vietnam, we had had a fair draft for more than two decades. By the end of Vietnam, even that draft was fair.

THE SUSPICION THAT JOHN Ashcroft is a right-wing nut appears to have been confirmed by his decision to overrule a plea bargain negotiated by his subordinates. They had offered a drug offender assurance of a life sentence instead of execution in return for his testimony against higher-ups. But Ashcroft has demanded that the defendant, Jairo Zapata, go to trial, which could result in the death penalty, reports William Glaberson of *The New York Times*. What this means is that every criminal facing federal prosecution in a possible death penalty case will know that there is no incentive for him to talk as part of a deal with the prosecution because Ashcroft could always overrule the deal.

For a fellow who is supposed to be so smart, Rumsfeld betrayed a shocking ignorance of history.

ON JAN. 20, THE front page of *The Washington Post*'s "Style" section was dominated by an article about the previous weekend's peace demonstration. Called "The Art of Peace" and subtitled "Displaying posters and body paint, the antiwarriors take a scattershot approach," the article began:

"It's the peacemakers—right?—who are blessed.

"This includes the 8- and 11-year-olds hanging out of the tree while one of their Bethesbian mothers hands them the family camera, imploring them to get a good shot of the crowd, which includes (which will always include) the kooky, ratty-looking Uncle Sam on stilts, and the patchouli girls fleetly flying around (patchouli girls now span, what, three generations?), and the drum circles, and the dudes carrying a poster that proclaims them as 'Mainstream White Guys for Peace.'"

The overall impression left by the article was that this was a march of kooks on behalf of a kooky cause. People who were there tell me that on the contrary, most of the marchers were serious and sober citizens, desperate for some way to show their opposition to W's rush to war.

Why was this snotty misreporting published by the *Post*? One explanation is that the *Post*'s first-team editors are not conspicuous by their presence on weekends. Another is that none of the editors bothered to attend the demonstration so they would not have known that the article was embarrassingly misleading. It did, however, have one redeeming element—a description of a sign carried by one marcher that read "Ein Volk, Ein Reich, Ein Fuhrer, Ein News Channel—Fox News."

THIS COUNTRY has been conned by Karl Rove and the super-hawks. They have succeeded in changing the subject from Bush's failures and embarrassments, putting Iraq first on the national agenda for nearly six months at the expense of more important matters—like finding Osama bin Laden, securing peace between Israel and Palestine, drastically improving the FBI's and CIA's ability to deal with terrorism, keeping nuclear weapons from being used by the nations that already have them, including North Korea, and engineering economic recovery here at home. If we end up paying practically all the bill for the war with Iraq and subsequent military occupation, that money won't be there for badly needed health and education programs. Thinking about Iraq alone—which is what the administration has tried to get us to do—it's easy to get fired up about teaching Saddam a lesson. But once you consider these other higher priorities the danger from Iraq isn't nearly imminent enough to justify war. Indeed, the administration's obsession with that danger is, as *The Washington Post*'s David Ignatius suggests, becoming as irrational as Captain Ahab's with Moby Dick.

AS ONE WHOSE HIGHEST MILITARY rank was "private," I am comforted when I find my opinion on military matters supported by someone whose expertise is less suspect. Thus, I was happy to note from an interview Gen. Wesley Clark gave Ignatius that the former NATO commander

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agrees with me that "the chief threat to U.S. security right now is al Qaeda. Disarming Iraq is important, too, but it's not the most urgent task." He also agrees that "overwhelming U.S. power could quickly crush Saddam Hussein's relatively weak forces" but worries about "the unpredictability of consequences."

For me, those consequences involve the possibility that another humiliating defeat of an Arab nation will inspire thousands of additional recruits to join al Qaeda. There is also the dismaying possibility that a liberated Iraq, or one of the parts that it breaks into—remember what happened to the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia after the iron grip of a dictatorship was lifted—would opt for Islamic fundamentalism and actually become allies of Osama bin Laden or that the new states—again, remember Yugoslavia—will war with one another.

I fear shuttle opponents will not prevail against industry lobbies and the tendency of public officials to automatically proclaim, "We must carry on," after a disaster suggests the exact opposite.

My guess is that Saddam will flee if provided a secure refuge in another country. I pray that this will happen because the people of Iraq would be spared the death and destruction that war would almost surely entail. And although some of those unpredictable consequences may still happen, they will not include the humiliation of defeat.

IVAN PRESTON, A PROFESSOR AT the University of Wisconsin, has looked into the laws governing false advertising and discovered a truth I had not been aware of: the bigger the lie, the more likely the advertiser will get away with it. Preston recently explained to *The Wall Street Journal*'s Barry Newman, "If Papa John's says it has the better dough, you can attack it. But if Papa John's says it's better overall, okay. The bigger the lie, the better the protection." Thus it's okay for Bayer to claim it's "the world's best aspirin" and Hush Puppies to be "the earth's most comfortable shoes" and for George W. Bush to say he's "the education president" and in his State of the Union address to proclaim himself an advocate of clean air.

MALPRACTICE is in the news again, so I have an excuse to revive the *Monthly*'s solution. Although much of the increase in malpractice insurance rates is the fault of the insurance companies, it must be conceded that excessive verdicts and frivolous suits are a not insignificant factor. Nevertheless, trial lawyers argue that their suits are the only way to discipline bad doctors. As of now, they are right. Medical licensing boards are far too tender in their treatment of offenders. If the boards got tough and yanked the licenses of careless doctors and negligent hospitals, the lawsuits would no longer be needed for disciplinary purposes. Their sole utility would be to compensate the patients who are the victims of malpractice.

There is, however, a more efficient way than lawsuits of meeting this need. A no-fault system in which doctors and hospitals would, instead of paying for insurance, make regular contributions to a fund to compensate anyone who got hurt by a doctor or a hospital. The cost of the victim's lost wages and medical care would be paid automatically without the necessity of proving fault. Awards for pain and suffering could be scheduled—so much for loss of a leg, etc.—so that juries would not be needed to determine them. In the case of truly outrageous conduct by doctors or hospitals, lawsuits for punitive damages could still be permitted. So the role of lawyers, if not eliminated, would be drastically reduced, along with the size of their fees. But none of this will happen if doctors and hospitals are unwilling to accept rigorous review by independent licensing boards.

MOST CIVILIANS ARE UNAWARE of a military racket called "training days." These are not really times devoted to training, but are, as one source explained to Bill Gertz and Rowan Scarborough of *The Washington Times*, "euphemisms for giving time off." Recently, for example, when Air Force Lt. Gen. Harry D. Raduege, director of the Defense Information Systems Agency, told his 8,200 employees that Jan. 17 would be a training day, they knew they would have a four-day weekend, including the Martin Luther King holiday on Jan. 20.

THE FOUNDING FATHERS DID not want an activist government. Excepting only the area of national security, they established a system of checks and balances designed to make it hard for the executive to do anything. Whatever the executive branch proposed, Congress had to approve, and that approval usually required lengthy hearings and debate to secure. If that daunting test was passed, and often it was not, the next hurdle was judicial review, which itself could involve several steps: first, the district court; then the court of appeals, sometimes divided into separate hearings before three-judge and *en banc* panels; and finally the U.S. Supreme Court.

Most educated people have a general idea, if not a grip on the precise detail, of the foregoing, but few understand what a proposal has to go through within the executive branch before it ever gets to Congress. HHS Secretary Tommy

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Thompson recently described for *National Journal* what happens when he has a bright idea:

"I have to vet it through all the various divisions and agencies in this department alone. Then, if I can get any degree of unanimity of support for my idea, then it goes over to the supergod called the Office of Management and Budget. And they vote you down nine times out of 10, just to show you who the boss is. Then if you do get it through OMB, then it goes over to the White House and the intelligentsia over there. They want to show you that they're in charge, so you usually have a very difficult time getting through them. If the president likes the idea, it goes on to Congress, and if Congress ever does approve it, then it's time to retire."

DR. JEFFREY W. RUNGE IS AN exception to the usual deference to big business on the part of the Bush administration. Runge, the head of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, displayed unusual courage recently when he spoke to Detroit auto executives and attacked SUVs that scored low in the government's safety ratings: "I wouldn't let my kid buy a two-star rollover vehicle if it was the last one on earth." A former emergency room physician who has treated victims of SUV accidents, Runge cited statistics showing, reports Cindy Skrzycki of *The Washington Post*, "that the fatality rate in rollover accidents is three times as high in sport-utility vehicles as in passenger cars."

Incredibly enough, despite what its NHTSA director says, the administration is supporting a tax break for small businesses that buy SUVs. The break would, for example, permit a tax deduction of $87,135 on a Hummer H1 priced at $102,581.

AIR CARGO IS THE MOST CONspicuous hole in the air-transportation security net. As the GAO recently noted, far too little is inspected, and far too few companies that handle the cargo have sound security programs that include employee background checks. Sens. Kay Bailey Hutchinson (R-Texas) and Diane Feinstein (D-Calif.) have introduced a bill designed to toughen the system. "There is no point asking travelers to wait in long security lines," Hutchinson tells Tom Ramstack of *The Washington Times*, "if we let cargo onto the very same flight with no precautions whatsoever."

PRACTICALLY DAVID FRUM'S only criticism of George W. Bush in his recent *The Right Man*—the title testifies to the book's general tenor—is that Bush "is impatient, quick to anger, sometimes glib, even dogmatic; often uncurious and as a result, ill informed; more conventional in his thinking than a leader should be." All of these are worrisome, but the one that concerns me most is the lack of curiosity. It seems to me that a president should hunger for information and for arguments that might show him how he needs to refine his thinking. He should devour the newspapers and magazines, searching for facts and ideas that might not come to him through official channels. Compare John F. Kennedy's press conferences with W's. Kennedy consistently displayed a mastery of fact, an ability to make and understand distinctions, and an appreciation of the subtext of questions. Can the same be said of W?

BACK TO THE DRAFT FOR A minute. Drafting the rich may be the best solution. It was an idea that the late Richard Harwood, a Marine veteran of World War II and an editor of *The Washington Post*, came up with in the course of a discussion involving him, William Greider and myself that appeared in our April 1980 issue. In other words, everyone else is serving voluntarily, the problem is with the elite—sons and daughters of the wealthy, Ivy Leaguers, and the corporate whiz kids—who are not doing their duty. Let's help them make the right choice.

Maury Maverick Jr., who died last month, was called a "champion of the unpopular" in his *New York Times* obituary. Indeed, the word "maverick" was inspired by one of his ancestors. One of his unpopular causes was the failure of the elite to serve, and he came up with a uniquely revealing way of demonstrating that failure. He looked at the religious denominations of the service people who died in the Gulf War. Practically none were from the denominations of the elite: Episcopalian, Unitarian, Jewish, and my own Presbyterian. On the other hand, the ranks were full of Baptists and Catholics.

IN THAT SAME APRIL 1980 issue appeared an article by one of our editors, Gregg Easterbrook ("Beam Me Out of This Death Trap, Scotty!"). In it, Easterbrook warned of the specific dangers that cost us the Challenger and appear to have cost us Columbia. Of the first, he wrote, "Here's the plan. Suppose one of the booster rockets fails? The plan is, you die." About the heat resistant tiles, he noted, "They are so fragile you can hardly touch them without shattering ... there is no backup for them. If they fail, the shuttle burns on re-entry." Easterbrook argued back then, and again last month in *Time*, that the shuttle program needlessly risks lives on tasks that could be performed by machines. On the same day his *Time* article appeared, *The Wall Street Journal* raised similar questions in a front-page article by J. Lynn Lunsford and Nicholas Kulish, a former *Monthly* intern. But even though the doubts are persuasive, I fear they will not prevail against the power of the industry lobbies behind manned space programs and the tendency of public officials to automatically proclaim, "We must carry on the program" after a disaster suggests the exact opposite course.

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What Ever Happened to National Service?

How a Bush policy pledge quietly disappeared.

BY RICHARD JUST

ON JAN. 29, 2002, PRESIDENT BUSH stood before Congress and delivered to a shaken nation the first State of the Union speech after the September 11 terrorist attacks. In that speech, Bush acknowledged that through the brave example of America's response a new era of service to one's nation had begun. "In the sacrifice of soldiers, the fierce brotherhood of firefighters, and the bravery and generosity of ordinary citizens, we have glimpsed what a new culture of responsibility could look like," Bush said. "We want to be a nation that serves goals larger than self."

There were good reasons to offer these words. For all the praise Bush had received in the months since September 11, one criticism was beginning to sting: that the only thing he'd asked Americans to do for the war effort was go shopping. Indeed, Bush's nemesis, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), had already introduced with Sen. Evan Bayh (D-Ind.) the Call to Service Act, a bill to expand fivefold the popular AmeriCorps program that is the centerpiece of civilian national service, and to authorize short-term military tours to boost enlistment in the armed services. In a political masterstroke, Bush surprised his critics, and many supporters, by proposing an even wider-ranging plan to support and expand national service, called USA Freedom Corps.

Freedom Corps was one of the most well received policies put forth in Bush's address. His plan sought to increase the ranks of groups such as AmeriCorps by 200,000 people. And, most dramatically, the president called on all Americans to serve. "My call tonight," Bush intoned, "is for every American to commit at least two years—4,000 hours over the rest of your lifetime—to the service of your neighbors and your nation." It was an effort, as Bush himself put it, "to sustain and extend the best that has emerged in America." The Freedom Corps office was created by executive order to act as a clearinghouse that would match the thousands of new volunteers Bush called for with the thousands of new volunteer opportunities he promised to create by expanding AmeriCorps, the Peace Corps, and Senior Corps.

Bush's plan drew praise from the president's supporters and critics alike. Not only was he touting an idea that had renewed significance to all Americans; national service also promised to be the rare issue that would transcend partisan political squabbling. Indeed, on the nationwide tour he conducted following his State of the Union address, Bush promised as much, pledging in a speech delivered in Winston-Salem, N.C., "I look forward to working with Senator McCain and Senator Bayh of Indiana to get this legislation through the Congress."

Yet one year later, with Osama bin Laden still very much at large and war with Iraq looming, Bush's vision for national service is not much closer to realization than it was at the moment he proposed it. AmeriCorps went unauthorized for a fifth straight year. Bush's national service bill never even made it to the floor of Congress. And the effort to "sustain and extend" the spirit of national purpose and unity has largely fallen by the wayside. Bush himself implicitly admitted as much. Instead of the soaring patriotic rhetoric that accompanied its introduction in last year's speech, Freedom Corps received no more than a fleeting mention in this year's address. All of which raises a puzzling question: How is it that an issue championed by a popular wartime president, favored by the vast majority of Americans, and supported by both par-

RICHARD JUST *is editor of* The American Prospect Online.

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ties has floundered so badly?

Selling Service

The popular consensus on the merit of national service that greeted Bush's speech didn't always exist. In its current incarnation, the idea of dramatically bolstering or even requiring civilian and military service for America's youth originated with a group of centrist Democrats in the 1980s loosely centered around the Democratic Leadership Council.

Initiatives backed by the national service movement, such as a 1989 attempt by Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) and Rep. Dave McCurdy (D-Okla.) to tie federal financial aid for college students to service requirements, initially fell flat, drawing the ire of both the left and the right. But in 1992, candidate Bill Clinton chose to make civilian service a centerpiece of his presidential campaign. Not only was the idea well received, Clinton found that it was his biggest applause line on the stump. Shortly after assuming office, Clinton introduced a civilian service bill like the one he'd campaigned on. However, it quickly ran into a buzz saw of resistance from the increasingly powerful House Republicans, who derided it as an example of costly, unnecessary government bureaucracy.

How has national service—an issue championed by a popular wartime president, favored by a majority of Americans, and supported by both parties—floundered so badly?

So Clinton had to settle for a modest and affordable iteration of civilian service that became the AmeriCorps program. The program was designed to place members, most of them college age, with local and national nonprofits such as Habitat for Humanity, the American Red Cross, and the Boys and Girls Club of America. Though its initial prospects looked dim, AmeriCorps proved a great success. Since 1994 more than 200,000 members have served by tutoring school children, building low-income housing, and helping to repair communities in the aftermath of natural disaster. By the time Clinton left office, AmeriCorps numbered 50,000 annually and had become a favorite of state governors, who loved the program because it provided free workers in badly needed areas. AmeriCorps even won over many conservatives, including the governor of Texas at the time, George W. Bush, who was one of 49 of the 50 governors in 2000 who sent a letter to Congress asking that the program be maintained. Among its other converts was McCain, who had originally voted against AmeriCorps but came to embrace the value of national service and push it energetically on the campaign trail (see "Putting the *National* in National Service," by Sen. John McCain, *The Washington Monthly*, October 2001).

Following the 2000 election, the national service movement appeared to be gaining momentum. Longtime proponents like the policy intellectuals at the DLC sought an alliance with an informal assemblage of likeminded "national greatness" conservatives, such as McCain, and a handful of Bush aides, including domestic policy adviser John Bridgeland and chief speechwriter Michael Gerson. The McCain-Bayh bill, introduced in November 2001, sought to increase AmeriCorps to 250,000 slots, create 18-month military enlistments, and require more college students who receive federal financial aid to perform community service in exchange. For once, the politics of national service seemed correctly aligned—in addition to bipartisan support, the outpouring of patriotism that followed the September 11 terrorist attacks seemed to further bolster its chances.

But throughout the 1990s—and even after September 11 and Bush's State of the Union speech—there remained a core group of conservatives in the House, led by Majority Leader Dick Armey (R-Texas), who never came around to supporting AmeriCorps, and never stopped trying to kill it. Last February, Armey called Bush's plan to expand AmeriCorps "obnoxious" and implied that he would fight efforts to move it through Congress. "We give least well when we give at the direction and supervision of the government, you know, and the idea that government can teach charity to America rings very hollow with me," Armey threatened in *The Washington Times*. And, though it was politically unpopular to say so, many House Republicans agreed with Armey. "There is this leftover notion with the hardcore right-wing," says Mark Kornblau, spokesman for Sen. Bayh, "that this is somehow associated with Bill Clinton."

As a result, nothing resembling Bush's plan or the McCain-Bayh bill ever made it as far as the House floor. After much squabbling, a watered down version sponsored by Reps. Pete Hoekstra (R-Mich.) and Tim Roemer (D-Colo.) did make it out of committee. But even though its sponsors expected it to pass by a three-to-one margin, Armey refused to schedule it for a vote. "To a lot of people who don't know Washington, it's a surprise that the majority leader has the power to single-handedly

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stop a bill," says one Democratic House aide. But that, he adds, is exactly what Armey did.

Of course, a White House as powerful as this one could have changed Armey's mind. But it chose not to try. And as David Broder of *The Washington Post* pointed out in a September column, when the White House sent its "must-pass list" of priorities to the Republican leadership last summer, the Citizen Service Act was not on it. Says one Democratic Senate aide who supported the legislation, "One phone call from the president to the House leadership could have gotten this done last year or at least sent it on its way." Without support from the White House—and none was forthcoming—a plan that just months earlier had appeared to be a sure thing died quietly without ever coming to a vote.

The only facet of the McCain-Bayh bill that did become law was short-term military enlistments, and only through some savvy legislative maneuvering on the part of its authors. McCain tacked the proposal—known as the 18-24-18 plan for its creation of 18-month enlistments followed by 24 months of reserve duty and an $18,000 stipend—to the larger defense authorization bill which was passed by Congress and signed by the president. Only because McCain holds a prominent position on the Senate Armed Services Committee and because the White House did not want to fight with him publicly did the enlistment plan pass. "We are delighted—but stunned," admitted Will Marshall, president of the Progressive Policy Institute, which is aligned with the DLC. Thus, the one modest advance of national service happened without any help from the administration. Says Kornblau, "[Bush] has yet to use the political capital of the White House or his sway with House Republicans to actually push something through."

Bush's Corps Problem

So why hasn't there been more of an outcry? Why hasn't Bush been taken to task for adopting the mantle of national service and then dropping it even as he tells the nation to prepare for war?

One reason is because national service is one of those peculiar Washington issues that enjoys broad support but has few vocal advocates. For all the good they have accomplished, the more than 200,000 Americans who have served in AmeriCorps have not organized into an effective lobbying organization as military veterans have. As such, they don't constitute a politically active constituency, like seniors do on Medicare and prescription drugs, or as big business does on tax cuts. Bush and his fellow politicians therefore don't fear a voter backlash when they don't manage to get the job done. In Washington, it takes an honest commitment and belief in the value of national service on its own merits to get it passed—and that is something the president has so far lacked.

There are a handful of people in the Bush administration who are still fighting to get national service passed, including Les Lenkowsky, CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service, which oversees AmeriCorps. But as Karl Rove no doubt recognizes, because national service is broadly supported but narrowly understood, it is an issue where 90 percent of the political gain is to be found in the pomp and procedure of announcing one's support for it and basking in the praise from colleagues, voters, and the media that immediately follows. This is exactly what Bush did. And it is why he can get away with saying, as he did in this year's State of the Union address, "Last year, I called on my fellow citizens to participate in the USA Freedom Corps, which is enlisting tens of thousands of new volunteers across America." What Bush left out—and what no one thought to challenge him with—is the fact that these tens of thousands of volunteers cannot sign up for the more than 100,000 new slots he promised to create in AmeriCorps, Senior Corps and Peace Corps, because Bush never spent the political capital to get them passed into law. And because he hasn't pushed Congress to appropriate sufficient funding for it, AmeriCorps was forced to stop enrolling new volunteers last November.

In fact, the most evident manifestation of USA Freedom Corps these days can be found at movie theaters, where trailers by celebrities such as New York Yankees pitcher Mariano Rivera and actress Angie Harmon still tout the virtues of Bush's ambitious—but as yet unrealized—vision. Most Americans could be forgiven for not realizing that the majority of their president's grand plan has never come to fruition.

Of course, with a new Congress in session and Dick Armey retired, there is always another chance that Bush will, however belatedly, follow through on his pledge and work with McCain to expand opportunities for national service. Former Sen. Harris Wofford (D-Penn.), the onetime head of the Corporation for National and Community Service and an elder statesman of the civilian service movement, believes Bush's commitment is real. "I don't have any doubt at all that the president wants it to go through," Wofford says. But with Armey gone and Republicans now controlling both houses of Congress, he notes, Bush's "hand is much stronger than it was last year." Another way to put this is that the White House is running out of excuses. If Bush still believes, as he put it in his last State of the Union address, that "Through the gathering momentum of millions of acts of service ... we can overcome evil with greater good," he will have to stand up and show it.

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First Draft

The battle to create universal national service has just started. Here's how it can be won.

BY PAUL GLASTRIS

IN JANUARY, AS U.S. TROOPS MASSED FOR A possible war with Iraq, Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) proposed something no lawmaker had done in years: legislation to reinstitute the draft. Rangel's idea sparked several weeks of lively debate in the halls of government, on TV pundit shows and in the op-ed pages. Proponents and opponents of Rangel's idea debated his charge that the current all-volunteer military puts a disproportionate number of African Americans in harm's way. They debated his contention that America's leaders would be less willing to go to war in Iraq if their own offspring were on the front lines. They debated whether conscription would strengthen the military or undermine readiness with large numbers of ill-trained, unmotivated troops. About the only thing both sides agreed on is that politically, a draft just isn't going to happen.

In a taking-the-temperature-of-Washington sort of way, this is unquestionably true. The president, his cabinet, the Pentagon brass, and leading members of Congress remain adamantly opposed to conscription. Though a handful of lawmakers have signed on to Rangel's bill, established opinion has written off the measure as noble-but doomed. A headline from a *Buffalo News* editorial summed up the mood: "Even if Conscription Stands No Chance, the Idea Poses Food for Thought."

But if the chance of universal service was measured by what the American people actually think, a different picture might emerge. In late January, a *Newsweek* poll found that 14 percent of Americans favored and 38 percent would consider reinstating the draft; only 45 percent would refuse to consider the idea at all. As it happens, that poll did not describe the kind of draft that Rep. Rangel has proposed, one in which young people would be able to choose either military or civilian service. The only poll I know to pose that question was conducted in November 2001 by the centrist Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), and found that 60 percent of Americans favored a draft that offered a choice between military or civilian service.

It's hard to know exactly what to make of these poll numbers. Among other things, they don't reveal whether those who oppose the draft are more intense in their opinions (as one might expect they would be) than those who favor it. Nevertheless, the polls do suggest that a majority of Americans are at least open to the idea of some sort of draft—more than supported the president's tax-cut-heavy economic plan in early February (46 percent), and more than supported a U.S. ground invasion "soon" (37 percent) rather than giving U.N. inspectors "more time." Yet the same Beltway observers who write off the draft as a political nonstarter think that some version of Bush's economic plan will probably pass and expect U.S. forces to march on Baghdad within weeks, not months.

They might be right about universal service. Then again, they have often been wrong. Most pundits in the mid-1980s dismissed the idea that the loophole-ridden tax code could be simplified, because doing so would mean gouging just about every Washington special interest. In 1986, Congress passed and President Reagan signed a bill simplifying the tax code. A few years ago, Beltway prognosticators insisted that soft money would never be banned because incumbents in both parties benefited from it. Last spring Congress passed and President Bush signed a bill banning soft money. Both measures faced serious obstacles while enjoying broad, if not very deep, public support. They became law only because of the intense and relentless efforts of a handful of smart politicians—

PAUL GLASTRIS *is the editor in chief of* The Washington Monthly.

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Sen. Bill Bradley (D-N.J.) and Treasury Secretary Donald Regan on tax reform, Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Russ Feingold (D-Wisc.) on campaign finance reform.

What, then, would happen if a similar cadre of committed politicians were to get behind some sort of 21st-century draft?

Volunteer State

Almost every argument against the draft boils down to the belief that we don't really need one to defend ourselves. According to this line of reasoning, the all-volunteer force is fully up to the task; and in any event, the public simply won't support conscription if they don't feel an immediate, obvious need. One often hears this from hawks who argue that we should invade Iraq, if only for precautionary reasons. Nevertheless, history belies the notion that a draft can only be passed when the need is overwhelmingly apparent. Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the Selective Service Act, which created the World War II draft, in the summer of 1940, more than a year before Pearl Harbor.

For the next two decades, the draft remained a successful and relatively uncontroversial fixture of American life. Millions of young men, from farmhands to Harvard students, put in their two years of service. Some enjoyed the experience; others hated it. All came away with a better sense of their fellow Americans. Most importantly, the military had the manpower it needed to prosecute World War II, the Korean War, and the early Cold War.

In the 1960s, three factors came together to undermine the effectiveness and popularity of the draft. First, the military's manpower needs lessened to the point that the Selective Service began instituting a draft lottery and offering an array of deferments, including for college. Second, as the Vietnam War turned ugly, more and more sons of the nation's elite availed themselves of such deferments to avoid fighting in what they saw as a pointless and unjust conflict. Third, a group of libertarian economists, led by Milton Friedman, began applying free-market principles to various aspects of government, including military manpower. They concluded that the policy of conscription amounted to a hidden "draft tax" on those chosen to serve. A fairer and more effective military could be had, they argued, if the government simply paid competitive wages to attract those interested in serving. President Richard Nixon, eager to defuse the anti-war movement, seized on the economists' ideas, and in 1973 created the all-volunteer military.

For the first decade, this force was a disaster; the quality of recruits and retention rates plummeted. Over time, however, as Congress beefed up military pay and benefits and the Pentagon got better at recruiting and managing volunteers, the quality of the force rose dramatically. By the 1990s, the average enlisted man or woman had substantially higher test scores and more years in uniform than in 1973, when the draft ended (though not necessarily higher scores than during the 1950s, when many more college-grade men were drafted). Greater aptitude and experience proved a boon to the new high-tech military. Studies began to show that smarter recruits were easier to train and did a more effective job manning everything from Patriot missiles to complex communication systems. And every soldier who reenlisted was one less soldier who had to be recruited and trained. The amazing success and low casualty rates of recent military engagements, from the Gulf War to Bosnia to Kosovo to Afghanistan, convinced most Pentagon leaders that the all-volunteer force was a blessing, and that any return to conscription would be militarily disastrous.

In the meantime, however, fundamental flaws in the all-volunteer force began to show. In the late 1990s, the military, especially the Army, started having serious trouble meeting recruitment targets without lowering standards. The percentage of enlistees deemed high quality dropped from 74.4 percent in 1992 to 59.1 percent in 1999. Retention rates also fell. More importantly, the increasing scope and pace of overseas deployments started eroding readiness and wearing out the troops. (See "G.I. Woe," page 34.) Since 9/11, many troops in the highest-demand specialties such as light infantry, military police, and civilian affairs have been spending the majority of every year away from their families, whether in training exercises in California or in tents in the Middle East desert.

Because the active-duty military simply doesn't have enough of these troops, the burden falls increasingly on reservists, who signed up for part-time duty but have become, in effect, part-time civilians. When not called to duty, these reservists typically work as police officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, hospital nurses—precisely the jobs most needed should a terrorist attack strike this country. But for reasons of law and fairness, municipalities are not allowed to fill slots left by deployed reservists. Nor would it be easy to hire capable replacements without bidding up salaries higher than many municipalities can afford. So the more the military is overstretched, the more homeland security erodes. If America invades and occupies Iraq, this overstretch will increase dramatically.

Defenders of the all-volunteer force believe the military can solve these overstretch problems the way it fixed earlier problems: recruit more troops with higher pay and better benefits. Yet with each passing year this is getting harder and harder to achieve. With the higher level of skill

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needed in today's high-tech military, recruiters are loath to hire many high school dropouts. But high school graduates increasingly prefer to go on to college rather than the military: 70 percent entered college in 2000 within a year after graduating, up from 57 percent in 1987, a trend that will almost certainly continue.

Bill of Good

A 21st-century draft ought to be crafted in a way that would help fix the weaknesses of today's all-volunteer force without undermining its strengths. Such a draft should provide what the military most needs: smart, college-quality recruits, funneled toward the peacekeeping roles that are an increasingly unavoidable part of war but that put a special strain on the combat-oriented all-volunteer force. It should also help shore up homeland defense and ease the burden on reservists. Finally, a draft to fit the times should strengthen the growing, bipartisan national service movement by providing young people the option of serving their country in a civilian capacity through programs like AmeriCorps.

It's not hard to imagine how such a draft might be structured. Every year, the federal government spends tens of billions of dollars subsidizing university education, from student loans to research grants. In the words of military sociologist Charles Moskos, "We've created a G.I. Bill without the G.I." Why not pass a law that says that no four-year college or university can accept a student unless and until that student completes a 12-month to two-year term of service? No lotteries, no deferments.

Such a measure would build on existing law; colleges are already required to assure that incoming students have registered with the Selective Service. It would funnel about a million young people a year into service, and would offer them something all Americans today demand: choice. They could choose to fulfill their obligation in the military, in homeland defense (guarding nuclear power plants, for instance), or in an array of national service programs—tutoring disadvantaged children, building low-income homes, or cleaning up after natural disasters. Most would no doubt select the least-risky option available. But others would choose the military, especially if such duty offered a significantly larger G.I.-Bill-type college grant. If only 10 percent chose the military option, the armed services would gain 100,000 fresh recruits a year, with aptitude test scores as high or higher than normal enlistees. And they would be motivated, having chosen the military over other forms of service.

Many young people would surely object to such a draft—if "draft" is the right word for it. But none would have cause to feel that their peers were getting an unfair head start on the career ladder, because all prospective four-year-college students would be in the same boat.

Even a draft such as this, tailored to modern needs, would run into a buzz saw of criticism—from nervous parents, the higher-education lobby, and libertarians of both the left and right who would see it as a form of "slavery." But with polls already showing significant public support for the idea, would it really be impossible to enact? That depends on whether there are politicians, think tanks, and newspaper editorial boards willing to fight for it. Two years ago, the idea that Iraq would be the primary target in the war on terrorism seemed farfetched. Public support was weak, and the entire national security apparatus, from the Pentagon to the State Department to the intelligence agencies, was against it. Yet a handful of committed neoconservative defense intellectuals in and out of government convinced the president, rightly or wrongly, to back the idea. That president's party went on to gain seats in the midterm elections. And as of this writing, 125,000 U.S. troops are poised to invade.

A few clever strategists are beginning to see similar possibilities for the draft. "If you challenge the American people, instead of pandering to them, they will be drawn to the cause, even when they don't agree with every particular," argues Bruce Reed, president of the DLC and a supporter of universal service.

President Bush, however, has done far more pandering than challenging. His much-trumpeted plan to expand volunteer national service has vanished without a trace (see "What Ever Happened To National Service?" page 8). Instead of calling on young people to serve in uniform, he has given an already overburdened military more and more missions. And instead of paying for the war as his wartime predecessors did, by raising taxes, he has cut taxes and wants to cut them more. The aim may be to shield current voters from the war's costs. But this is fiscally and militarily irresponsible—and any White House aspirant would be both patriotic and politically shrewd to point that out.

Some conservatives are beginning to understand this vulnerability. At a recent roundtable on universal service sponsored by the nonprofit Grantmaker Forum on Community and National Service, Tod Lindberg, editor of the conservative journal *Policy Review* (and a draft skeptic), said: "If I were asked to pick a single big issue that I think could galvanize, energize, and return power to the Democratic party, I think national service may well be that issue." Perhaps, then, the draft is not the political loser that most Beltway observers think it is. It just might be something like the opposite: the sleeper issue of 2004, waiting for someone smart and daring enough to grab it. ●

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Saddam's Serb Supplier

How our last enemy has been arming our next one.

BY DAVE MARASH

LAST OCTOBER, SEVERAL DOZEN American troops assembled outside an anonymous new low-rise factory building in a half-empty industrial park on the outskirts of Bijeljina, a small town in northeastern Bosnia. The owner of the factory, a firm called Orao, was well known among arms dealers and weapons manufacturers. During the 1980s, when a still-intact Yugoslavia maintained the fourth largest military in Europe, Orao was the Yugoslav Air Force's contractor of choice for jet engine maintenance. After the partition of Bosnia in 1995 and in defiance of U.N. sanctions, they went into business with a new client: Saddam Hussein. Orao became Iraq's prime contractor for servicing its Mig-21 jet engines.

When NATO soldiers finally raided the plant, seizing everything on site, they found, among other things, a long letter on the stationary of Yugoimport, the Yugoslav government's arms trading company. The letter explained to the firm's Baghdad buyer what to do if U.N. weapons inspectors arrived. First, it instructed, the Iraqis were to remove all evidence of the Orao connection and disassemble the engines. Once the inspectors left, the letter continued, Orao would reassemble the upgraded MiG-21 jet engine—free of charge, as part of the contract agreement.

Few Americans know about the connection between Saddam Hussein's Iraq and the former Yugoslav National Army, the front end of a military-industrial complex riddled with mafia connections and ties to Serbian nationalist groups. But the story is a cautionary tale about how, at the dawn of the 21st century, the lawlessness and chaos of one rogue regime or failed state can—if left untended—spill over into the affairs of others, with potentially dreadful consequences.

Three American administrations have now had to grapple with the wreckage of the former Yugoslavia, with little success. The administration of George H.W. Bush did its best to avoid involvement in the Balkans; as then-Secretary of State James Baker famously said, "We've got no dog in this fight." When the Clinton administration finally intervened in force, first in Bosnia and later in Kosovo, the effect was more to stop warfare than to project real peace and civility: by rooting out endemic corruption, arresting war criminals, and establishing the rule of law. There was neither a serious nor a sustained effort to reshape the region's basic institutions or place the various countries of the former Yugoslavia on a path toward achieving political stability, civic rights, and economic growth, as America did successfully in Germany and Japan after World War II. The result was to end bloodshed but leave the region in a state of endemic lawlessness, free from war but rife with organized violence and corruption. In other words, the Clinton policy freed the region from war but abandoned it to rule by often-government-connected mafias.

But even this low level of involvement was more than

DAVE MARASH *has received an Emmy Award for his coverage of the Balkans for "Nightline."*

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the current White House seems willing to bear. Instead of working to root out Bosnia's endemic corruption, arrest war criminals, and establish the rule of law, the Bush administration has been angling for two years to extricate us from the region—and America and Europe are starting to pay the price. The Balkans today are fertile territory for those seeking to smuggle guns, drugs, and persons into Western Europe. And as the Orao raid revealed, chaos in the Balkans, mostly ignored by the Bush administration, could actually threaten American troops during an invasion of Iraq—a task which has been the chief focus of American foreign policy for more than a year.

Yugoslav experts were contributing to an Iraqi program to retrofit jet trainers for remote piloting, so they could be turned into "poor man's cruise missiles," capable of delivering a 1,000-pound bomb up to 900 miles.

Rocket in my Pocket

Yugoslavia's role supplying weapons expertise to Iraq has actually been a well-known fact for several years. Indeed, once Slobodan Milosevic was deposed in 2000, the Bush administration set about trying to get Yugoslavia's new government to crack down on transfers of military equipment and knowledge to Iraq. Little progress was made, however, and last September, as President Bush announced his intention to force Saddam Hussein to give up his weapons of mass destruction, State Department officials summoned Goran Svilanovic, Yugoslavia's foreign minister, to Washington for an explanation. Svilanovic was in the United States to attend the U.N. General Assembly session at which President Bush announced his global campaign against Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. There was, recalls Svilanovic, a new note of urgency. End the Belgrade-Baghdad connection and punish the people who run it, he was told, or risk losing America's goodwill—and billions of dollars in aid. The Orao plant had been especially embarrassing for the United States since it lay in a part of Bosnia nominally under the supervision of American peacekeeping forces.

Soon after the Orao raid, more evidence of a Serb-Saddam connection surfaced. Acting on American intelligence, Croatian police in the port of Rijeka raided the cargo carrier *Boka Star*, which was supposed to be loaded with "activated charcoal." Instead, it was loaded with 208 metric tons of chemical ingredients for exactly the kind of solid rocket fuel used in Iraqi Scud missiles. This connection was critical, American government sources suggest, because the *Boka Star* was part of a well-watched fleet that regularly sailed between Tivat, a Yugoslav naval base, and Syria, where many cargoes were trucked to Iraq. Evidence discovered on board indicated that the *Boka Star* and its bogus cargo had been inaccurately papered several times over by Yugoslav naval and customs officials.

That wasn't the only Tivat connection. Earlier in the year, American officials had learned that a team of Yugoslav military officers from the base had spent two weeks in Iraq consulting, it was believed, on air defense. Around the same time, professors from the University of Belgrade were both teaching and consulting with Iraqis about air defense—and, perhaps even more disturbing, offense. As American officials pieced the evidence together they envisioned a nightmare scenario: Yugoslav experts were contributing to an Iraqi program to retrofit jet trainers for remote piloting, so they could be turned into "poor man's cruise missiles," capable of delivering a 1,000-pound bomb up to 900 miles.

The possibility was more than simply theoretical. As investigators learned at the Orao plant, the same folks who had been repairing and upgrading engines for Iraqi MiG-21s thought they knew how to build a much smaller engine—one that would extend the lift capacity and range of the jet trainers. Officials in Baghdad and Bosnia had apparently discussed the matter. Dr. James Lyon, head of the Belgrade office of the conflict analysis organization International Crisis Group, says his sources believe a prototype for the engine was actually built. (Others think the plans haven't progressed quite that far. Dejan Anastasijevic, a respected Yugoslavian investigative reporter, says that while some sort of poor man's cruise missile was promised to Iraq, as far as he knows, "It never came past the modeling stage.")

Confronted with all the evidence, Bosnian Serb officials eventually indicted three plant managers at Orao, and may soon charge the retired Air Force commander who heads the firm. The Yugoslav government has sacked two top executives of Yugoimport, both former military officers, as well as a mid-level official in the defense ministry. But U.N. and NATO

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officials are not impressed.

The Sopranos of Belgrade

The dangerous problems spawned by a failing state reach beyond the illicit Yugoslav-Iraqi relationship. Lawlessness pervades the Yugoslav capitol of Belgrade today. Downtown streets are regularly the scene of mafia assassinations or, in bungled cases, gunfights. And the halls of government are hardly a crime-free zone. "Let me be honest with you," says an adviser to one of the government officials implicated in the Yugoimport scandal. "When we threw out Milosevic, we had to make deals with many of the mafias, to accept this without civil war. Some of the deals kept some people alive. Some of the deals kept people in power. Yugoimport has always been run by the government and the military." Between Yugoslavia's various ethnic militias, criminal syndicates, and paramilitary groups—each of them linked to factions in the government—there's no one left to play the policeman. "Who will move against them?" asks the official.

Lawlessness is also paralyzing development in Bosnia. The Dayton Agreement ended up handing Bosnia back to the three nationalist political parties which had destroyed it, spawning ethnic mafias which have corrupted everyday business and social life in Bosnia. These mafias, along with the remnant armed forces of both the Serb- and Muslim-Croat-controlled territories, are formidable enough that the international officials in Bosnia have been reluctant to challenge them.

There have been exceptions, such as last year's crackdown on suspected al Qaeda militants who had come to Bosnia after September 11 under the protection of the local Muslim nationalist party. But more typical, and more relevant to the lives of most Bosnians, has been the experience of Gen. Jacques-Paul Klein, the greatly admired, recently retired coordinator of U.N. programs in Bosnia. One of Klein's major achievements was shutting down what had been a major migration route for illegal immigrants from Iran, who came through Sarajevo and moved on to parts of Western Europe. Some of these migrants, it is claimed, were either Islamist radicals or terrorists or both. Gen. Klein's first mandate, however, was to create professional police forces for the communities of Bosnia. He was successful, up to a point. All over Bosnia, honest, well-trained local cops can and do investigate criminals. But arrests and prosecutions must be handled at the entity level—that is, by the respective governments of the Bosniak-Croat

U.S. Troops in Bosnia: Wimpier Even Than The French

By Kurt W. Bassuener and Eric A. Witte

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION has committed itself to prosecuting Saddam Hussein and other high-ranking Iraqi Ba'athist leaders before a war crimes tribunal like that established for the former Yugoslavia. But America's unwillingness to follow through on such commitments in the Balkans is undermining our credibility. The continued freedom of Bosnian-Serb war criminals Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic is a standing indictment of American seriousness and resolve.

Karadzic, the former Bosnian Serb political leader, was indicted in 1995 for ordering the siege of Sarajevo and the deaths of some 8,000 Muslim men and boys after the fall of Srebrenica in July 1995. He and his military commander, Ratko Mladic, along with Saddam, stand as the most prolific butchers of Muslims in the post-Cold War decade. Yet Karadzic has been living for most of the past seven years on Bosnian territory controlled by the United States and France. True, Karadzic is said to be well guarded. But his is a low-rent operation compared to what the United States will likely face in rooting out Saddam's cronies in post-war Iraq. If the United States can't catch such a big fish in the small pond of Bosnia, what can be hoped for in much larger Iraq?

Still more disturbing, a lack of fortitude rather than capability is the heart of the problem. At the outset of the NATO mission in Bosnia in 1996, the Clinton administration placed a high premium on avoiding casualties. They feared arrests might spark an uprising. Those fears allowed Karadzic to pass openly through U.S. Army checkpoints at that time. Later, the State Department supported his arrest, but the Pentagon opposed it. Last year, the U.S. general then commanding NATO peacekeeping forces, Gen. John Sylvester, wanted to arrest Karadzic, but he could not get the support of U.S. intelligence agencies.

Failing to bring Karadzic and Mladic to justice avoids trouble in the short term. But it keeps the Bosnian kettle at a simmer and virtually guarantees that American forces will remain tied down there indefinitely. What's more, there's

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enclave, known as the Muslim-Croat Federation, and the Serbian territory, called Republika Srpska. Those governments, of course, are themselves rife with criminal connections. "Building a police force is like clapping with one hand, if the other hand is rule of law. There's never been agreement here on what rule of law should be. So what you tend to have is ethnic justice. Without rule of law," Gen. Klein laments, "you have no foreign investment, you have no confidence."

Indeed, foreign investment in Bosnia is conspicuously absent. For the same reason—institutionalized corruption—smaller-scale domestic investment has also been stunted. "You never want to be too successful," says one Sarajevo businesswoman I spoke to. "More to the point, you never want to be seen as too successful. You suddenly have 'partners' you don't want." She describes a friend whose garage grew in business until the proprietor incautiously bought himself a new Audi. "That was the signal," she says. "One day, a guy drops by and tells my friend to change his brand of gasoline. A little later, he comes back for a share of the receipts. A little later, my friend decides he doesn't like this arrangement. There is a fire. My friend is stubborn. There is a beating. My friend is in another business now."

While the dominance of nationalist parties has kept Bosnian schools ethnically segregated—with children learning the mutually exclusive Serb, Croat, and Muslim version of Bosnian history depending on which group they belong to—the corruption of Bosnia's ruling class has taught the student generation a disrespect for law. I saw this disrespect manifested in Sarajevo on New Year's Eve 2001, when kids tossing firecrackers harassed older folks from the *corso* hours of early evening throughout the night. It was not enough to discomfort survivors of the three-year siege of Sarajevo, for whom simulating the noise of firearms is anything but celebratory; the teenagers delighted in terrorizing older people by hurling the tiny explosives at their feet.

"This absolutely expresses what is happening to that generation," says a good friend of mine, a journalist from Sarajevo. "First, they hated their parents because they could not protect them from the snipers or the bombs of the siege. Now, they hate us because of this shoddy, lawless state we have settled for."

Duly Elected Gangsters

None of this can be fixed overnight. But downsizing the United States' diplomatic or military commitment to the Balkans is certainly not a solution, accord-

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good evidence that even the short-term costs would be minimal. When British Prime Minister Tony Blair came to power in 1997, he initiated a policy of forcibly arresting war-crimes indictees in the British sector of Bosnia. The British have now arrested 15 indictees with nothing remotely approaching the violent demonstrations that the naysayers predicted. During the same period, U.S. forces have arrested only five indictees, outdone even by their notoriously passive French counterparts, who, with much assistance from the Germans, were involved in six.

Karadzic's well-known involvement with organized crime hasn't tarnished his reputation with simple Bosnian Serb nationalists who still see his "ethnically cleansing" half of Bosnia as a glorious achievement. If he is allowed to reemerge after the departure of international forces, he would instantly repolarize Bosnia and unravel all the hard-won advances toward reform and reconciliation.

President Bush must make arresting Karadzic a priority. And to do that, he must order his State Department, Defense Department, and CIA to cooperate in finally bringing Karadzic to The Hague. He should appoint a task-force executive, with coordination authority, to guarantee that bureaucrats, especially in the intelligence agencies, don't stymie or obstruct this vital mission.

Capturing Mladic will mean taking a firm line with Serbia, where politicians feign ignorance of the 15 to 20 indicted war criminals living in their territory. We already know that Belgrade's former Yugoslav military has sold weapons and military know-how to rogue states like Iraq and Libya. How can we trust the leaders of post-Milosevic Serbia if they can't force their military to cease such violations or turn over war criminals like Mladic?

Today, a war crimes tribunal for Iraq may be more the work of White House speechwriters than State Department lawyers. But our ability to enlist allies in our fight to take out Saddam will depend on the credibility of our commitment to post-war Iraq. And success once we're there will depend in part on our determination to arrest war criminals who murdered Muslim civilians. President Bush can help us succeed in Iraq tomorrow by doing the right thing in Bosnia today.

KURT W. BASSUENER is an independent foreign policy analyst. ERIC A. WITTE is an analyst at the Coalition for International Justice in Washington, D.C.

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ing to a leading international administrator in Bosnia. "Orao shows, and Yugoimport shows, that in Bosnia and Serbia, there is work yet to be done," says Paddy Ashdown, a British official who heads the European Community's operations in Bosnia. Ashdown points out that without international peacekeepers in Bosnia—the American component of which some Bush administration officials wish to see withdrawn as swiftly as possible—"we wouldn't have discovered [Orao]." If Orao had been left in operation, he argues, Yugoslavian-provided weapons might already be in use shooting down American planes patrolling Iraq, or threatening U.S. troops massing in the Persian Gulf.

More broadly, Bosnia illustrates the dangers of leaving war-torn nations half rebuilt: The thugs and criminals who destroyed the Balkans are now exporting crime and chaos beyond their borders. "You've got a real problem, I think, in the whole of the Balkans," says London military analyst Paul Beaver. According to European law enforcement officials, the failed or failing states of the former Yugoslavia—Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia—have become the leading suppliers of light arms to the criminal gangs and terrorist groups of Western Europe. "We've got handguns appearing in Britain, more discovered the past few months in Britain than in the decade before, and a lot of those are designs that originate in the former Yugoslavia. They come through Europe into places like Rotterdam and Antwerp and across the Channel, so they now become a problem for Britain as well as for Europe as a whole."

There's a danger, too, in battling lawlessness piecemeal. Even as mafias associated with the former Kosovo Liberation Army have been disarmed in Kosovo, an analogous "liberation movement" has popped up in neighboring Macedonia. As in Kosovo, legitimate Albanian aspirations for civil and political equality have become dissolved into a guerrilla war between criminal gangs and the government. And once again, an anti-Albanian government responded viciously against the civilian population, until an outside force of international peacekeepers got involved. The effect of intervention has been something like peace—but only barely. Criminal gangs who once comfortably used routes through Kosovo, Serbia, and Montenegro now use Macedonia to transport contraband cigarettes, drugs, women, and weapons from failing post-Soviet bloc states like Bulgaria, Romania, and Moldova to Italy, and from there to the markets of Western Europe.

See No Evil

The situation the United States and its European allies now confront is one that started off ugly and complex and only became more so after being allowed to fester for more than a decade. In all the failing states of the former Yugoslavia, allied efforts to advance civility and the rule of law have focused principally on limiting commitment and risk, or on providing protection to international personnel. All have stopped well short of restoring rule of law to local societies. In all these states, lawlessness has empowered the most violent and corrupt elements of pre-war society to dominate local politics and to export the products of their criminal enterprises to Europe, to Iraq, and in the cases of Yugoimport to Libya, Liberia, and Burma—among the most delinquent governments on earth. And while there is plenty of blame to go around for letting it get this bad, the current administration might learn from the mistakes of the previous administration which held back from demanding the sort of robust rules of engagement which might have prevented the slide into crime, thuggery, and lawlessness which the Serb-Iraq connection epitomizes. As the United States cleans up in post-Taliban Afghanistan and prepares to do the same in a post-Saddam Iraq, the dearly learned lesson is or should be: No more Bosnias.

Instead, the Bush administration has turned out to be even more wary of foreign commitments than their predecessors in the Clinton administration. They have pressed to quicken the pace of the drawdown of American forces from Bosnia and Kosovo, while in Afghanistan, American-led international intervention has followed the Balkans pattern of little ventured, little gained for rule of law. The so-called International Security Force provides security for a little less than the capital city Kabul, and hardly anywhere else in Afghanistan. The Bush administration is so eager to avoid responsibility for order in Afghanistan that they've outsourced to mercenaries the work of protecting Afghan President Hamid Karzai. When it comes to controlling the continuing exportation of Islamist radicalism, weapons, and opium, U.S.-administered Afghanistan seems likely to prove the old dictum: You get what you pay for.

Somewhere beyond war-torn Iraq looms post-war Iraq, a cauldron full of political passion, long-standing corruption, and loads of dangerous weapons—including, one assumes, those of mass destruction. Should they reach the world's outlaws as widely and easily as have the dangerous detritus of post-war Yugoslavia, the world will be an unhappier and more dangerous place than it is today. ●

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Better Living Through Chemistry

DDT could save millions of Africans from dying of malaria —if only environmentalists would let it.

BY ALEXANDER GOUREVITCH

BY MOST MEASURES, UGANDA IS ONE of the success stories of African development. Under President Yoweri Museveni, a former guerrilla and darling of the international donor community, Uganda has achieved GDP growth of 6 percent per year, gradually expanding political freedoms, and a measure of peace. In a continent beset by poverty and political disorder, Uganda has slowly become a model for how to get things right. Even the AIDS epidemic, which infected an estimated 20 percent of Uganda's population a decade ago, seems to be under control.

But a more old-fashioned plague has come back to haunt Uganda: malaria. The mosquito-borne illness costs Uganda more than $347 million a year. Today, up to 40 percent of the country's outpatient care goes to people thus infected. Total infections are so numerous that the government doesn't even try to track them, but last year, 80,000 people died of the disease, half of them children under the age of five.

So last December, at a convention of regional health ministers held in Kampala, Jim Muhwezi, an army officer and member of parliament who today serves as Uganda's minister of health, announced the launch of a new campaign against the epidemic, using Dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane, or DDT. To Muhwezi, DDT—a pesticide widely proscribed in Europe and banned in the United States since 1972—was a cheap, effective weapon against malaria for a poor country with minimal public health resources. And in South Africa, the recent reintroduction of DDT spraying had reduced malaria rates by 75 percent over two years. "Instead of sitting back and watching our people die of malaria and lose in economic terms," he proclaimed, "an all-out war against the disease must be waged."

But Muhwezi encountered opposition almost immediately. After his announcement, Andrew Sisson, a USAID official attending the Kampala convention, told one session that in the United States DDT had been found to "cause environmental problems," according to Muhwezi. A member of Uganda's parliament warned Muhwezi that Europe and the United States might ban imports of Uganda's fish and agricultural exports, a fear shared by local environmentalists, according to the *Nairobi East African*, Kenya's leading daily. Since USAID prefers to fund bednets as a solution to Uganda's mosquito problem, Muhwezi is unsure if he'll be able to obtain international assistance to fund a DDT-based malarial eradication project. "We hope they'll come along. But if they don't, we'll do it alone."

Until recently, one might have considered Uganda's to be a tragic but unavoidable tradeoff—deprive many of an uncontaminated natural environment, or save few from malaria. In much of the world, after all, the popular conception of DDT is of a dangerous and toxic chemical that pollutes water and poisons the food chain; in the United States, DDT is remem-

ALEXANDER GOUREVITCH *is an* American Prospect *writing fellow.*

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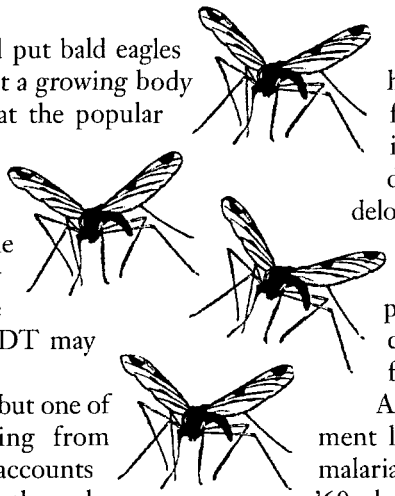
bered as the pesticide that helped put bald eagles on the endangered species list. But a growing body of scientific evidence suggests that the popular conception is wrong. Older studies on the effects of DDT have been called into question, and newer ones militate against the notion that DDT is inherently dangerous. For the kind of use Muhwezi has in mind, in fact, DDT may not be dangerous at all.



The stakes are high. Uganda is but one of many African countries suffering from malaria epidemics. Africa already accounts for 90 percent of the 2 million deaths and 300 million infections around the world each year, and it costs the continent 1.3 percent in annual growth per year, according to the economist Jeffrey Sachs. Mosquitoes are increasingly resistant to the main insecticide put into use to replace DDT; and the parasite that causes the disease has, in recent years, become increasingly resistant to the cheapest and most common medical treatment, a drug called chloroquine. Yet most international aid agencies, development agencies, and lending institutions have moved away from funding spraying projects in general, and DDT use specifically. Without assistance, African governments cannot afford spraying programs, leaving them bereft of a safe, effective, and cheap defense. Which means that aid agencies and governments opposed to DDT use may end up costing Africa millions of needless deaths.

Bad Medicine?

DDT first came to the United States after the late 1930s, when Dr. Paul Muller, a chemist with the Swiss firm J.R. Geigy, found that minuscule amounts of DDT killed just about every insect he could find. Slow to break down, a single application of DDT remained toxic for up to a year, which made spraying programs much easier to administer, especially in remote locations. It was cheap to produce, easy to ship, and did not require the extensive safety gear of other insecticides. And remarkably, even when mosquitoes developed resistance to the toxicity of DDT, it still acted as a repellent and irritant, driving nocturnal mosquitoes out of homes before they had a chance to bite. (This mechanism was discovered later—originally, it was just toxicity and safety that attracted people to DDT.)

Impressed, the U.S. military deployed DDT in 1942 to fight a third front against diseases like malaria, dengue, and typhus, which until then had seriously impaired U.S. fighting forces, especially in Italy and the Pacific Theater. Army personnel sprayed soldiers, dusted beachheads, and even deloused concentration camp survivors with DDT. After the war, DDT came into use for commercial and public health purposes. Farmers used DDT to protect cash crops like cotton, corn, and apples from a wide variety of agricultural pests. Around the same time, the U.S. government launched an ambitious DDT-centered malaria eradication project which by the early '60s had virtually eliminated malaria from Southern Europe, the Caribbean, and parts of East and South Asia. (In India, for example, annual deaths went from 800,000 to zero.) At the time, DDT was thought to be such an effective and useful substance that in 1948, Muller received a Nobel Prize in medicine. "To only a few chemicals does man owe as great a debt as to DDT," declared the National Academy of Sciences in a report in 1970. "In little more than two decades, DDT has prevented 500 million human deaths, due to malaria."

But by then, the tide had begun to turn against DDT. During the 1960s, reports began to emerge of increasing resistance to the drug among insects, probably sparked by its widespread use in agriculture. At the same time, case-detection followed by medical treatment began to emerge as the new model for malaria control. (By 1979, the World Health Organization had formally endorsed this approach over that of preemptive insecticide spraying.) Most important, however, was the publication of Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* in 1962.

Carson's book was a lyrical broadside against synthetic chemicals in general, but against DDT in particular. She noted that as DDT seeped into the ground and ran off into streams, worms and fish stored it in their fatty tissues. Over time, songbirds like the robin and other prized avians, including bald eagles and peregrine falcons, ingested enough contaminated prey that they died of DDT poisoning. If they didn't die outright, Carson warned, studies also showed that DDT prevented reproduction by thinning eggshells. Carson also trumpeted studies of rats which suggested DDT was a liver carcinogen, and gathered anecdotal evidence of harm in human beings, like a farmer whose bone marrow wasted away after repeatedly inhaling a mixture of DDT and benzene hexachloride he used to spray his fields.

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Silent Spring practically launched the modern environmental movement. The Environmental Defense Fund cut its teeth in national politics raising public alarm over—and bringing lawsuits against—DDT use, which in turn pushed the recently created Environmental Protection Agency to hold a series of hearings on DDT. The critics were so successful that, although the administrative judge presiding over the hearings concluded that "DDT is not a carcinogenic hazard to man ... DDT is not a mutagenic or teratogenic hazard to man," the EPA banned it anyway in 1972. (Chemical companies, of course, were more than happy to supply the less practical, more expensive alternatives.) The U.S. ban was a turning point; soon after, anti-DDT sentiment went global. Environmental organizations campaigned against its use abroad, wealthy countries began to restrict funding for DDT projects, and the World Health Organization shifted away from promoting it for public health uses. By 2000, a group of environmental activists, led by the World Wildlife Fund, was promoting a U.N. "persistent organic pollutants" treaty known as the Stockholm Convention, which would have banned DDT worldwide for all uses. Only at the last minute was an exemption added for public health use.

Like most chemicals, DDT is harmful in high doses. But when it comes to the kinds of uses once permitted in the United States, there's simply no solid evidence that exposure causes cancer or is otherwise harmful to human beings.

Reconsidering a Rogue Agent

But over the years, mainstream scientific opinion has absolved DDT of many of its supposed sins. Indeed, the Stockholm Convention partially backfired because it brought to light a slew of studies and literature reviews which contradicted the conventional wisdom on DDT. Like nearly any chemical, DDT is harmful in high enough doses. But when it comes to the kinds of uses once permitted in the United States and abroad, there's simply no solid scientific evidence that exposure to DDT causes cancer or is otherwise harmful to human beings.

Not a single study linking DDT exposure to human toxicity has ever been replicated. In 1993, Mary Wolff, an associate professor at Mount Sinai Medical Center, published a small study linking DDT exposure to breast cancer. But numerous follow-up studies with human subjects—including one large five-study review comparing 1,400 women with breast cancer to an equivalent number of controls—found no evidence for the link. David Hunter, an epidemiologist at Harvard University who ran one of the follow-up studies, says of the breast cancer connection, "the studies have really put that idea to rest." Similarly, various studies have contradicted initial concerns that DDT might cause myeloma, hepatic cancer, or non-Hodgkins lymphoma.

Other reports over the years postulating human toxicity in DDT exposure turned out to be cases of correlation without causation. In its heyday, for instance, DDT was mixed with a variety of dangerous chemicals, sometimes petroleum derivatives. In every anecdote of death or human harm by DDT that Carson related, the chemical had been dissolved in some other, highly toxic, substance, such as fuel oil, petroleum distillate, benzene hexachloride, or methylated naphthalenes. Such "mixtures with other chemicals or solvents," a 2000 review article in the medical journal *The Lancet* noted, were responsible for many of the reported deaths from DDT and for other problems like dermatitis. But even these dangers do not extend to public health use, where DDT is dissolved in water and sprayed as a thin film.

That's not to say that DDT is harmless. Matthew Longnecker studied American women who had lived during the period of high DDT use and suggested that high levels of DDT in the bloodstream of pregnant women might cause pre-term delivery and low birthweight, for instance. But public health use doses—two grams per square meter of wall sprayed indoors at most every six months—aren't likely to produce those concentrations. Since DDT is not absorbed through the skin, spraying DDT in houses is unlikely to expose pregnant women—or any-

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one else—to amounts great enough to pose a danger. And scant evidence suggests DDT gets into the environment in significant amounts when sprayed indoors. According to a WHO report in 2000, "The targeted application of insecticides to indoor walls ... greatly reduces dispersion of the chemicals into the environment. For this reason, the environmental risks from such targeted measures [are] considered minimal."

Agricultural use, on the other hand, is very different, amounting to literally tons of the chemical sprayed outdoors every few weeks. But almost nobody who supports using DDT to combat malaria wants to see it come back into use as an agricultural pesticide. The ideal pesticide is one that will stay on the crop but break down and virtually disappear by the time of harvest. DDT, on the other hand, is persistent and takes a long time to break down—which is why it tends to accumulate in the environment over time. "Even though there's no evidence right now that it's harmful to human beings, there's no sense in taking the risk of using it when other pesticides, better-suited for agricultural use, are available," says Donald Roberts, an expert on tropical health at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Md. DDT is also so cheap that, when it was legal, farmers often used it well in excess of the officially prescribed amounts.

While DDT may prove to have as-yet-unknown environmental side effects, malaria has a well-known, direct effect: It kills millions of people a year.

Yet environmental activists resist distinguishing between the agricultural and public health uses of DDT. Richard Liroff, a spokesman for the World Wildlife Fund, says, "We hang most of our argument" against DDT spraying on studies like Longnecker's. But the clear benefits of DDT use would seem to outweigh the potential dangers. Malaria, after all, also causes low birthweight in newborns (and mental retardation in infants). And while DDT may prove to have as-yet-unknown side effects, malaria has a well-known, direct effect: It kills millions of people a year.

Environmental Mea Culpa

But although prevailing scientific opinion favors the use of DDT in anti-malarial campaigns, international aid agencies still take their cues from environmental groups. Roll Back Malaria (RBM), a WHO-sponsored consortium of aid agencies, international institutions, and NGOs, has a 40-page action plan for reducing countries' reliance on DDT, with the goal of eventually eliminating its use for public health purposes. And the international donors who fund most anti-malaria campaigns usually follow RBM's technical guidelines. "Bottom line is, [RBM] favors the ultimate elimination of DDT from the malaria toolbox," says Dr. John Paul Clark, a former RBM adviser with expertise in DDT, although he concedes that "there are a number of countries that are not economically or epidemiologically ready to make that switch at this time."

While few organizations have a *de jure* ban on DDT projects, very few have actually put money behind them. No international aid agency will fund DDT use. The World Bank is currently funding a malaria control project in Eritrea on the condition that the country not use DDT. The recently formed Global Environmental Facility has donated money to projects in both Africa and South America, likewise with the intent of weaning recipient nations off DDT. In an emailed statement, USAID's malaria team informed me that its "activities are focused to reduce reliance on the pesticide DDT." They are "emphasizing prevention, medical intervention, and mosquito nets dipped in pyrethroid." Richard Tren, head of a group called Africa Fighting Malaria, says that the international aid agencies of Sweden, the United Kingdom, Norway, Japan, and Germany have all told him they would not fund DDT projects, nor will UNICEF. And lacking the resources to develop domestic programs on their own, most African countries bend to the requirements of these international funders. (South Africa is one of the few African countries wealthy enough to fund its own program.)

Those alternatives that aid agencies will fund are either less effective, more expensive, harder to administer, or inadequate on their own. "Eco-friendly" approaches like mosquito repellent trees or mosquito-larvae-eating fish have been tried in East Africa, where the malaria epidemic is particularly bad, but with little success. The pesticide pyrethroid was originally developed as a biodegradable DDT alternative, but mosquito resistance throughout Africa is ren-

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dering it increasingly useless. Other substitute pesticides, like carbamates and organophosphates, have turned out to be no more safe or effective than DDT, and most lack DDT's ability to repel mosquitoes even after they build up resistance to it. DDT is at least four times less expensive than the cheapest alternative—even though it is only still produced by one factory in India—and requires less frequent spraying. Both are significant advantages in poor African countries with minimal infrastructure, where every dollar not spent bringing malaria under control can be used for other public health priorities, such as supplying clean water. "DDT is long-acting, the alternatives are not," says Donald Roberts. "DDT is cheap, the alternatives are not. End of story."

Amir Attaran, a former WHO expert on malaria, once supported funding alternative pesticides, but South Africa's experience changed his mind. "If South Africa can't get by without DDT, it's pretty much as if to say that nobody can," says Attaran. "They really tried to phase this stuff out, and had the budget to afford the alternatives ... They tried and failed." (South Africa had switched from DDT to pyrethroid in the mid-1990s, but switched back in 2000 when the mosquitoes became resistant to the pyrethroid, causing malaria cases to skyrocket). There has also been a move to use insecticide treated bednets, particularly in East Africa, but few believe that bednets alone can address the problem. "All large-scale programs that have been successful have been based on insecticide control," notes Brian Sharp, Director of the Malaria Research Program for South Africa's Medical Research Council and director of their spraying program. "I don't believe we should discriminate against [bednets or DDT] ... One has to practice integrated vector control ... [But] DDT is an important tool in this fight."

It is difficult to get a clear answer from aid agencies why they won't fund DDT. They may be hesitant because they receive contradictory guidance: National DDT bans conflict with WHO guidelines saying it's safe and effective, which in turn conflict with Roll Back Malaria's blueprint for phasing out DDT. Nobody seems to want to stick his or her neck out to clarify things. Most importantly, already-underfunded Western aid agencies are concerned about a backlash if they did fund DDT, since doing so might well provoke the lingering fear of DDT among the citizens of wealthier countries. Several experts told me that they are specifically afraid of tangling with the environmental lobby. When Attaran circulated a letter two years ago protesting a total ban on DDT, the head of Roll Back Malaria excoriated him for undermining RBM's relations with environmental groups. Attaran, formerly a lawyer for the Sierra Club, thinks the environmentalists should correct the misperceptions they have perpetuated. They should do what "the pharmaceutical [companies] did on access to AIDS medicine in Africa. They did a mea culpa. The environmentalists need to do the same thing."

"It Shouldn't Be This Hard"

That's not to say that all anti-malaria aid dollars should go to DDT. It makes sense to balance between funding available measures and investing in new ones. Presently, however, too little money goes to DDT at a time when few effective tools are available. Local conditions will determine the best course of action; in some places, DDT may be less effective than others, and funding should be adequate and open enough for countries to experiment with what's right for them. Brian Sharp, for instance, argues that money could go to a rotational spraying program, under which DDT would be rotated with other insecticides to prevent the development of resistance among mosquitoes and extending the effectiveness of non-DDT alternatives. Yet opposition to DDT has undercut even that compromise.

An environmentalist mea culpa would be a start, but in the United States, at least, nothing short of congressional hearings or an executive order from the Bush administration is likely to spur USAID to change its ways. The most direct approach would be a reconsideration of the EPA ban on DDT, with an explicit mandate to use some of the foreign aid budget for DDT spraying should countries ask for it. USAID's current goals for Uganda are for at least 60 percent of the country's population to have access to drugs and bednets; Jim Muhwezi, for one, would like USAID to set its goals higher. But it's not easy to get them to listen, especially with poor African countries trying to curry favor with aid agencies. Indeed, neighboring Tanzania has stayed away from DDT because, among other things, it is too "controversial," according to Alex Mwita, the program manager for Tanzania's National Malaria Control Programme . "You have to remove the myths that people have in their minds that it is not a good chemical." It shouldn't be this hard. African governments know what they need to do to control malaria—they just need the money. Like Mwita, Brian Sharp says he's waiting for the West to get over its "misguided opposition to DDT." So is Africa. ●

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Who's Who

BY SUSAN THREADGILL

It took new Treasury Secretary **John Snow** little time to start complaining about the media. Why? Because his golfing prowess had been misreported. He used his Senate nomination hearing to "correct the record in a very major way," refuting reports by *The Washington Post*'s **Jonathan Weisman** that he was a scratch golfer. It's not because Snow doesn't get to practice—he belongs to at least 18 country clubs. Before his confirmation, Snow did resign from one club—Augusta National, home of the Masters golf tournament and controversial chairman **Hootie Johnson**, who continues to fight activist **Martha Burk**'s push to force the club to accept a female member.

Of course, most folks on the Hill were probably less interested in hearing about Snow's golf prowess and more concerned about how he managed to get sued for defaulting on his child support obligations. And the White House dumped **Paul O'Neill** because of his bad press?

In the newly minted Republican-controlled Senate, it took Judiciary Committee Chairman **Orrin Hatch** (R-Utah) little time to get moving on **George W. Bush**'s judicial selections, infuriating Senate Democrats by packing three controversial nominees into a single day's hearing. Led by Sens. **Patrick Leahy** (D-Vt.), **Edward Kennedy** (D-Mass.), and **Chuck Schumer** (D-N.Y.), the Democrats complained bitterly of having only one day to question U.S. Court of Appeals nominees **Deborah Cook**, **John Roberts**, and **Jeffrey Sutton**. Hatch insisted the nominees weren't controversial. Shot back Sen. **Russ Feingold** (D-Wisc.): "I don't think it's in the eyes of the chairman to determine whether they're controversial or not. That's sort of our job." Dems focused most of their questions on Sutton, who has infuriated many in the disabled community because in 2001, he argued (successfully) to the Supreme Court that the Americans With Disabilities Act didn't apply to state employers. Sutton and Cook are being nominated for the 6th Circuit—the very court Republicans stonewalled on during **Bill Clinton**'s administration. Under Republican Senate rule from 1997 to 2001, none of Clinton's nominees for the current 6th Circuit vacancies received a hearing. Expect more fireworks soon. Said Kennedy of Hatch's packing tactic: "I resent it, and I find that it's not a particularly good way to expect that we are going to have wide cooperation." Given just a day with the nominees, Democrats dragged the hearing well into the evening, questioning them for 12 hours.

Speaking of the Judiciary Committee, Sen. **John Edwards** (D-N.C.) has a funny way of showing his appreciation for holding onto his coveted committee seat, which as a junior member, he'd been in danger of losing when the Democrats lost control of the Senate. Edwards was present for only five minutes of the aforementioned 12-hour hearing, and, the next day when the committee voted on another controversial nominee, **Miguel Estrada**, Edwards sent his "no" vote in by proxy. Said ABC News' inside-the-Beltway newsletter, *The Note*: "Memo to the Edwards folks: your Judiciary Committee colleagues clearly are watching."

When **Al Gore** picked Sen. **Joe Lieberman** (D-Conn.) as his '00 running mate, the punditariat wondered whether it would be a help or a hindrance on the campaign trail. Sen. **John Kerry** (D-Mass.) seems to have answered the question. Last month, after fellow '04 candidate **Wesley Clark** told *The Forward* that his late father was Jewish and descended from "generations of rabbis," Kerry revealed that his grandparents were actually Czechoslovakian Jews named **Kohn**, who later changed their name to the more Bostonian-sounding—let's make that incredibly Bostonian-sounding—"Kerry." Now Kerry has been using this nugget while campaigning in the Sunshine State. Far from being exceptional, it seems, Jewishness is becoming *de rigeur* for Democratic presidential aspirants. What's next? The **Gephardt** family's shtetl days?

Over the hills and past the rainbow lies that El Dorado of Democrats' dream: the fabled "Heritage of the left" (HotL), the hoped-for think-tank, or really *talk-tank*, that would be a stable for progressive talking heads competing with right-wing gabbers on cable TV. Famed financier **George Soros** is interested in bankrolling such an enterprise. And he's said to have earmarked a cool $20 million to help get it off the ground. Of course, that's just chump change to billionaire Soros. But it's a king's ransom to sad-sack Democrats who seem likely to be hit very hard by the new campaign finance laws which go into effect during the next election cycle. Soros was working with Clinton White House insiders **John Podesta** and **Harold Ickes** to build the HotL. But it seems that pairing didn't come off. Now Soros is looking for some other clever operators to turn his $20 million into that HotL pot of gold. Any takers?

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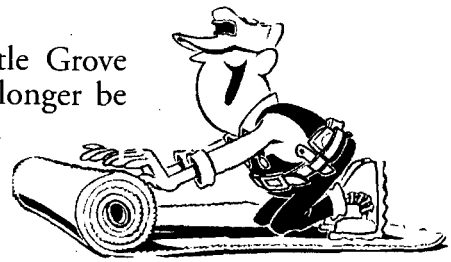
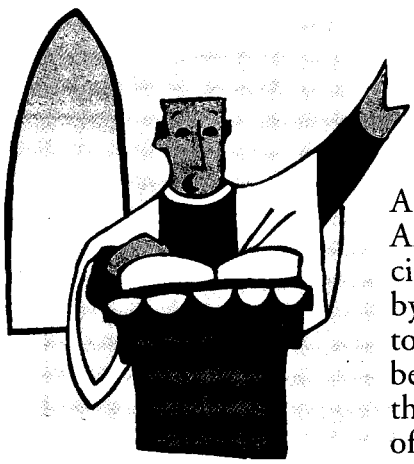
Tidbits & Outrages

Carpet bagging the vote

Florida may have a new election scandal. The Myrtle Grove Volunteer Fire Department says its firehouse can no longer be used as a polling station. The reason: wear and tear on the new carpet.





At least they don't charge

A recent survey by the American Family Association, a right-wing lobbying group, brought tough news for its members: Researchers found that evangelicals are some of the least liked groups in America, narrowly edging out prostitutes.

Sex police lose an officer

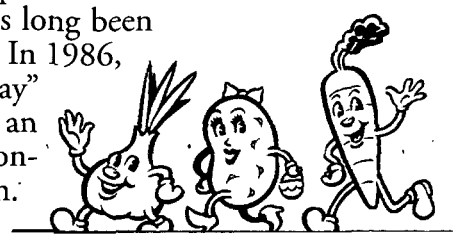
Rampant budget shortfalls have taken a toll on state governments across the country. But none quite like Utah's, which had to eliminate its "porn czar"—the nation's only state official whose job was to monitor pornography.

You stink, you walk.

Riding the bus in Bend, Ore., could soon be a little more pleasant. A proposed regulation would ban anyone who "emanates a grossly repulsive odor that is unavoidable by other … customers."

Where's the beef?

Tennessee vegetarians are furious that Gov. Don Sundquist refuses to proclaim a "Vegetarian Month." Yet meatlessness has long been a politically charged issue for Volunteer State governors. In 1986, Gov. Lamar Alexander christened "World Vegetarian Day" and was attacked by the meat industry, which led to an impressive political pirouette: To appease pro-meat constituents, he served beef at a "Vegetarian Day" luncheon.



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The New American Dream

The economy will prosper again when more Americans can do the work they love. The party that realizes this first wins.

BY RICHARD FLORIDA

THE DEBATE OVER THE NATION'S economic policies has become so vacuous and out of touch that it's alarming. The Republicans look eerily like the party of Calvin Coolidge, with a tax cut on corporate dividends masquerading as their catch-all solution to a stalled economy. The Democrats have at least tried to help, with tax cuts for lower-income people, assistance for state and local governments, and extended unemployment benefits. But such fixes are merely palliatives.

It is time for a change. The market crash, the ensuing recession, the worsening societal inequality—these are not normal cyclical downturns or growing pains. We are in a crucial transitional stage. The nature of our economy is changing; the nature of what people want from our economy is changing. A whole new system for creating wealth is taking shape, a new kind of capitalism that is powerful and full of promise, but far from fully formed. Yet neither party is proposing measures that might help it along because neither appears to grasp what's going on.

The key factor going largely unheeded is the rise of creativity as the central force in our economy. Without great waves of new products, technologies and industries, our economy would barely have grown since the dark days of the 1970s and early 1980s. Without constant innovation none of our industries will avoid the grim fate that befell factories and offices across the United States. Innovation doesn't come magically from an invisible hand. It comes from people. Every innovation, be it the Palm Pilot, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, or the tweaks that make a chemical plant run better, can be traced to human creativity—to people having ideas and finding better ways of doing things.

In recent history, the number of people doing creative work has exploded. Those in creative occupations—from engineers and designers to artists and writers to higher-end planners, analysts, managers, and other "creative professionals"—now comprise more than 30 percent of the workforce, up from about 10 percent in 1900 and only 20 percent as recently as 1980. Creative-sector workers today outnumber blue-collar workers. And the creative sector of the economy accounts for nearly half of all wage and salary income—$1.7 trillion dollars per year. The rise of the creative sector has also changed the way people work, as well as their expectations. The American Dream is no longer just about money. Better pay, a nice house, and a rising standard of living will always be attractive. But my research and others' show another factor emerging: The new American Dream is to maintain a reasonable living standard while doing work that we enjoy doing. In fact, many people are willing to trade income for work they enjoy. I've interviewed countless professionals who left secure jobs for riskier new ventures, often at lower pay, not for a shot at a stock-option bonanza but for a chance to do

RICHARD FLORIDA *is the Heinz professor of economic development at Carnegie Mellon University and the author of* The Rise of the Creative Class *(Basic Books). Writer* MIKE VARGO *and researcher* KEVIN STOLARICK *assisted with this article.*

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work that excites them.

I've seen it on the lower rungs of the economic ladder as well. While unions and politicians bemoan the loss of "good" manufacturing jobs, such as machine-tool operator, states like Pennsylvania have actually had a hard time filling those jobs that remain, even as cosmetology schools fill up with working-class kids hoping to be hair stylists. The hair salon typically pays less and offers fewer benefits than the machine shop—but it's seen as more creative and stimulating. The point is not that we should all join startups or become hair stylists. It is simply that what growing numbers of Americans want today is the very same thing needed to strengthen our economy. Not just more financial opportunity, but more creative opportunity.

A whole new system for creating wealth is taking shape, a new kind of capitalism based on human creativity that is powerful and full of promise, but far from fully formed.

Yet both parties disregard these dynamics and put forth "old economy" solutions: tax cuts, financial incentives, and fiscal pump-priming, along with financial safety nets, tariffs, and other favors to protect big firms. I've seen similar measures fail in nearly 20 years of research on state and local economic development. Desperate to keep firms and industries, and to lure new ones, many cities and regions bled themselves with tax cuts, building projects, and other costly incentives. To uphold their sinking "major league" status, many squandered scarce public funds on dramatic gestures like new stadiums, which diverted the public's attention but added little or nothing to their region's creative capacity. The result was counterproductive: Existing firms and industries downsized their payrolls anyway, while growth flourished in places like the San Francisco Bay Area and Boston, which actually had higher costs but better creative climates. Today we are reprising this flawed strategy at the national level. The real key to driving the economy forward and "completing" our emergent creative system doesn't lie in financial incentives alone but in summoning innovation—human creativity.

Nor is it always true that the financial carrot will lure the creative rabbit out of the hat. At the system level, the drive for financial gain encourages innovation in many ways, but can also stifle it or waste it—by favoring quick-payback applied R&D over basic research; by diverting lots of creative energy into narrow channels like high-margin luxury goods; by letting investor greed fuel speculative bubbles that burst and spoil the game for everyone. And at the personal level, money is vastly overrated as a motivator of human creativity. There is little evidence that Edison or the Curies toiled at their experiments for the chance to get rich; Edison was sometimes *too* eager to plow money back into more experiments. What drove the Wright brothers to invent was not financial competition, but creative competition: the race to be first to fly. It's this kind of "competition" that truly motivates most scientists and inventors, and even football coaches, artists, and rappers. To keep our economy vital, the behavior that fundamentally needs to be incentivized and supported is not money-making but creative activity. When more people do the good work they enjoy, wealth will follow—not the other way around. Developing a vision for expanding opportunities for creative work is the great untapped political opportunity for both parties in the new century.

It is also an economic imperative. Other countries are competing in the creative economy. Ireland is now the world's second-leading exporter of software, while Finland, with Nokia, is a world leader in cell phones. Japanese auto firms were first to put hybrid and fuel-cell cars on the street. India and Indonesia are rising powers in high-tech fields like software and biomedicine. According to studies by my research team, Canadian cities like Toronto and Vancouver now surpass many U.S. metro areas on measures of creative activity and potential. In a creativity-driven economy, leads are tenuous and even small players can quickly come to the fore.

Our nation must keep building the creative capacity that has made us strong. And we must avoid the traps that hold us back—including those that spring from the emerging creative age itself.

A Nation of Designers

Creativity—the ability to come up with and implement a new idea—has always been the prime source of economic growth and advantage. In prehistory, some

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people learned that cultivating plants and animals worked better than hunting and gathering. In the Industrial Revolution, ideas carried the day. And in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the vitality of capitalism was correctly credited by the economist Joseph Schumpeter to the "perennial gales of creative destruction" that swept through it—periodically sweeping out old ways of doing things, sweeping in the new.

In the later 20th century, the pace of creativity quickened while the profit from routinized production plummeted. A new version of capitalism began evolving in which creativity was not just perennial but constant, in which rapid-fire innovation and continuous improvement were the norm. The United States surged to lead this emergent system. It didn't happen merely because government stood back and let the free market work. Many factors combined to foster the conditions for human creativity and harness it on a wider scale than ever. After World War II, federal funding for basic research ramped up dramatically, as did higher education through the GI Bill. In the private sector, the venture capital industry provided a new avenue for bringing research ideas to market and employing bright people. The combination of these factors has been potent: It's been calculated that the high-tech companies spun out from just one university, MIT, would now constitute a nation with the 24th-largest GDP in the world.

There were other factors. In the 1990s, U.S. firms (belatedly) adopted the Japanese "creative factory" methods whereby workers contribute ideas for improving productivity and quality. Outsourcing played a role by leading to creative specialization: A firm can focus on designing chips or clothing and contract others to do the manufacturing. Last but not least, the United States took the creative lead by being an open and diverse society. Immigrants flocked here and fueled our growth: Nearly 30 percent of new businesses in Silicon Valley in the 1980s and 1990s were started by foreign-born people. Our freedom of expression has allowed new art forms to flourish—from rock music to independent publishing to digital media—and allowed artistic and technical creativity to commingle. The result was a sustained outpouring of human creative activity, in every form imaginable.

Also, as Virginia Postrel and others argue, design or "aesthetics" has become increasingly important to what sells. The United States makes fewer and fewer products—and sells few services on the world market—that are commodities, sold strictly on the basis of low price. Often it is largely the design work and marketing that determines whether someone will buy a Dodge Neon or a Hyundai, a Dell computer or a Sony. Emphasis on design and creativity is what pushed Target ahead of K-Mart. Material costs and energy and labor costs will always be major factors. But as a nation, in many cases we're already outsourcing the parts of the work (or exiting entire businesses) in which these factors would put us at a disadvantage. As an economy, we are moving inexorably toward earning our keep by adding creative value. Thus creative work, no matter how it's measured in dollars and cents, is what we all rely on.

Regions that have the strongest creative economies also have the greatest income inequality—and vote Democratic. Those with lagging old economies have the least income inequality—and vote Republican.

The Eminem Economy

The rise of the creative sector has also transformed the American Dream. In the years just after World War II, millions of Americans rather quickly acquired a steady job, a car, and a new house—and they quickly grew bored. They read books like *The Organization Man* and *The Lonely Crowd*, and recognized in them their own stifling boredom. They idolized James Dean and Brando, and dreamed of being a *Rebel Without a Cause* or *The Wild One*. They stuck to the grind for the sake of their children—and those children became hippies, rejecting a "higher standard of living" in favor of creative living. And as that generation (and its children) matured and entered the workforce, they sought a new and expanded Dream of their own.

Clearly, a living wage is still essential. Too many Americans still have trouble affording what they need or would like to have. But being able to afford food and decent health care is merely a baseline requirement. Most people, including those on the lowest rungs, have a bigger vision, and it isn't "the chance to get rich," the

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line Reagan once borrowed from Lincoln. It's Jefferson's idea: the pursuit of happiness. The dream is to reap intrinsic rewards from our work rather than merely be "compensated" for the time and effort we put in.

As observers from the sociologist Ronald Inglehart to the Nobel Prize-winning economist Robert Fogel have pointed out, this is an effect of living in a post-scarcity, post-materialist society. Once a society moves above subsistence level, its members start seeking more than material rewards from their work. Many people come to value intrinsic (or creative) opportunity over financial opportunity. The economist Scott Stern has found that academic scientists actually "pay" to engage in their work. On average they forego about a quarter of what they could earn in the private sector for greater freedom to pursue the research that interests them. In surveys of information-technology workers, *Information Week* finds that the job qualities most highly valued by the greatest numbers of workers are "challenge" and "responsibility." Base pay ranks third, and financial incentives like bonuses and stock options far below that, even below quality-of-life factors like commuting distance. Look at popular culture, from Eminem in *8 Mile* to Jennifer Lopez in *Maid in Manhattan.* Why do young people from the ghetto to the suburbs dream of being rap stars? Not just because they're rebellious or because being a rapper provides their best shot at big money. Most stand a far better chance of earning an athletic scholarship than a recording contract (and even big-money athletes want to be rappers!). It's because being a rapper is creative—fun and stimulating (I'd imagine) in a way that a routine desk job never will be.

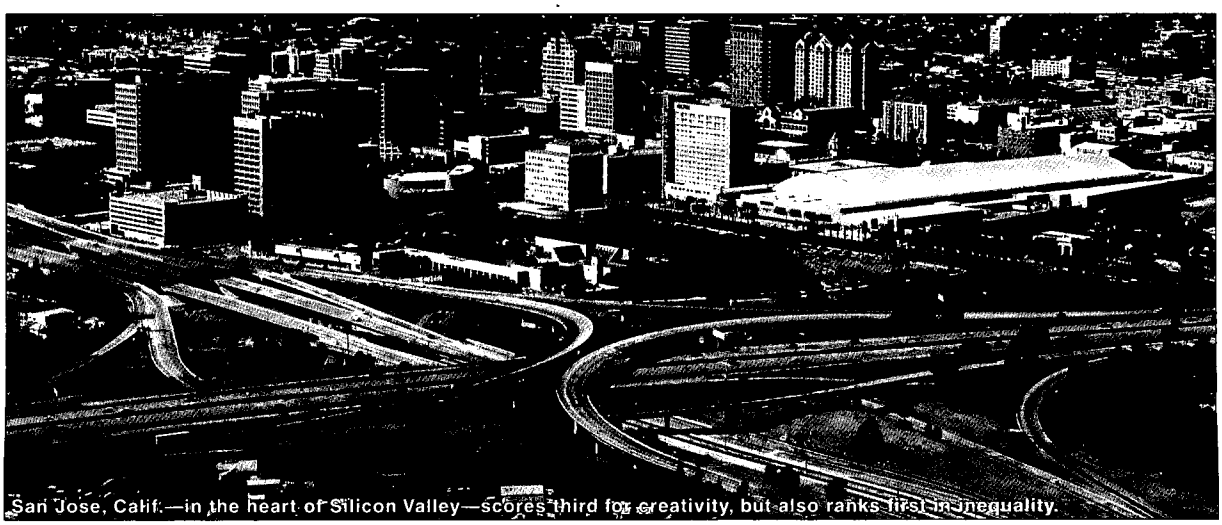
Should our economic goal be to enable every young person to earn a living as a rapper? Of course not. But conceptually, it's in the right ballpark. Recognizing and tapping creative talents, whatever those talents may be, is a pretty good starting point for a serious debate on how to keep our economy healthy.

Catering the Class War

Today, we have levels of income inequality not seen since the 1930s. And the issue isn't simply one of social justice or equitable distribution of rewards. It is a matter of functional inequality—and creative waste. Seventy percent of the workforce does not have the opportunity to do valuable creative work, as the favored 30 percent does. We are not close to hitting on all cylinders.

And I see little sign that either political party understands the real root of this inequality. Republicans tend to see inequality as the natural byproduct of a Darwinian system in which some people are more competent and industrious than others. True to a degree, but there's nothing either natural or desirable about letting it run to extremes. Historical evidence shows that periods of high inequality (like the 1930s) are also ones of low growth, while eras of lower inequality (like the "Great Compression" that followed World War II) are accompanied by high growth. Democrats tend to see inequality as damaging national unity and weakening consumer demand, and thus something to be remedied by government assistance or wage supports. As for the roots of rising inequality, liberal thinkers from William Julius Wilson to Paul Krugman and others have cited factors that range from the loss of high-paying manufacturing jobs to an assault by the rich and conservative on unions and other institutions that might help poorer people.

There are good points to be gleaned from all these analyses. But my research suggests that rising inequal-



San Jose, Calif.—in the heart of Silicon Valley—scores third for creativity, but also ranks first in inequality.

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ity stems mainly from the very nature of the emerging creative economy. If you define "class" as I do—by economic function—you see that the largest, at 44 percent of our workforce, is the lower-end service class, a category that includes janitors, food-service workers, healthcare attendants, office and clerical workers, and many others. The ranks of these people are increasing in large part because the growing numbers of busy creative workers require an army of "servants" to minister to the many things they don't have time for. As one astute Silicon Valley observer told *The New York Times*: "Behind every software engineer is a nanny or a food-service worker." This massive functional division of human labor produces the bulk of our income divide.

Rankings of Income Inequality

Large Regions

The most creative regions are also the most unequal, and vice-versa

Rankings of 61 metro areas reporting populations over 1 million

The Ten Most Unequal Regions	Inequality Ranking	Creativity Ranking
San Jose, CA	1	3
Raleigh-Durham, NC	2	4
New York, NY	3	13
Middlesex, NJ	4	28
Orange County, CA	5	23
Dallas, TX	6	14
Boston, MA	7	7
San Francisco, CA	8	2
Washington, DC	9	9
Houston, TX	10	19

The Ten Least Unequal Regions	Inequality Ranking	Creativity Ranking
Las Vegas, NV	61	42
Forth Worth, TX	60	38
Buffalo, NY	59	59
Riverside, CA	58	49
Grand Rapids, MI	57	61
Salt Lake City, UT	56	44
Memphis, TN	55	50
Louisville, KY	54	58
Indianapolis, IN	53	30
Milwaukee, WI	52	55

It also threatens our national competitiveness. Japan taught us this lesson in the 1970s, when its manufacturing firms leaped ahead of ours with their continuous-improvement methods that tap the intelligence of every worker on the shop floor. U.S. firms—stuck in the old Fordist system, whereby engineers and top managers did the thinking while the masses did the rote work—nearly had their doors blown off. Many of our firms have since caught on to the new way. But our economy as a whole replicates the outmoded, inefficient Fordist regime. Unless we can change that, we risk faltering once again.

The Next Civil War

Moreover, our new inequality has troubling geographic dimensions. My colleague Kevin Stolarick has developed an index of wage inequality comparing creative-class wages to others' to study the relationship between inequality and regional prosperity. His main finding is startling: City-regions that rank highest in terms of creative economic strength also rank highest in income inequality. Among major metropolitan areas, San Jose, in the heart of Silicon Valley, scores third on my multi-factor Creativity Index and also ranks first in inequality. North Carolina's Research Triangle is the fourth-most creative region and has the second greatest level of inequality. Boston ranks seventh on both scales. Conversely, regions lagging in creative economic strength tend to be more equal—more people are chugging along in the same slow boat. The same basic pattern is true for regions of all sizes. (*See charts.*)

These regional patterns have significant political implications, though neither party is eager to address them. While Democrats portray themselves as champions of economic and social justice, they draw high levels of support from Blue-state and so-called "ideopolis" regions like San Francisco and Boston that are also high in inequality. Republicans, on the other hand, think of themselves as representing the entrepreneurial, wealth-generating class, but now supplement their traditional high-income constituents by courting laggard Red-state regions with greater equality but far less vibrant economies. It's a politically driven, mixed-up system that does not appear likely to lead either party to address our core problems.

Meanwhile, the United States is caught in a pattern of uneven regional development not seen since the Civil War. This is not the old North-South split or a coastal-heartland split. Rather, in all parts of the country, some regions are moving toward higher creative growth (Austin, Boston, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Denver, Portland) while others become mired in either slow

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growth (New Orleans, Grand Rapids, Buffalo), low-end service-economy growth (Las Vegas), or no growth at all. Those in the first group are emerging as the clear overall "winners" in the new creative economy.

What's driving this split is a massive flow of human creative capital. My research finds mobile, demanding creative workers migrating to certain kinds of places they favor: places where they can find not just "a job" but lots of opportunities, and where they can find participatory amenities—active outdoor sports, not just stadiums; café-and-gallery "street-level" culture, not the symphony. They also seek places of demographic diversity, openness to newcomers, and stimulating cultural interplay. And the catch is, such regional qualities tend to be self-reinforcing. A region with many creative industries and creative-class workers will thus attract more of both, while the losing regions—well, they lose them.

Robert Cushing of the University of Texas has found evidence of this great "class sorting" in his research on regional talent exchanges. By comparing home regions on sequential tax returns, Cushing traced migration patterns between metro areas in Texas and the rest of the country. From 1992 to 2000, for instance, he found more than twice as many people moving from Pittsburgh to Austin as vice versa. Moreover, those leaving Pittsburgh for Austin had a much higher average annual income (more than $58,000) than those coming the other way (about $44,000), a sign that Austin is attracting higher-valued workers while shedding those less valued.

Many other factors also reinforce this split, but the upshot is this: As a nation, we are beginning to divide into two kinds of regions with different economic prospects, and the political implications could be dire. The old North-South split not only bred a civil war, but continued to drag on our society and economy well into the next century. A great deal of FDR's New Deal—continued by postwar spending—was geared toward redeveloping the South as a modern urban-industrial economy. What might be the repercussions of a new split?

And what can be done about it all? One all-around solution to inequality that both parties offer is education. If we can just catch these working- and service-class people when they're young and teach them right, the thinking goes, surely many will climb the ladder to success. Maybe they'll improve their regions' fortunes in the process. The trouble is, improving education for the masses is always a tough sell. High-end creative workers, who often send their kids to private or elite public schools, may have to be persuaded to pay higher taxes for educating children other than their own.

What's more, the creative-region dynamic injects an added disincentive for investment in public primary and secondary schools. Leading creative regions like Austin "import" many of their workers by winning the regional talent exchange, in effect plucking them after they're fully educated. Regions with top-flight universities, like Stanford and MIT, can also draw the best and brightest high school grads from everywhere and hold onto many of them after graduation. Either way, mobility has broken the connection between local investment in education and regional economic growth. In fact, some regions can do quite well without anteing up a big investment in homegrown talent. Talent-

Rankings of Income Inequality

Medium-Sized Regions

The most creative regions are also the most unequal, and vice-versa

Rankings of 42 metro areas reporting populations 500,000 to 1 million

The Ten Most Unequal Regions	Inequality Ranking	Creativity Ranking
Ventura, CA	1	26
Albuquerque, NM	2	1
Wilmington, DE	3	16
Jersey City, NJ	4	11
Colorado Springs, CO	5	8
Birmingham, AL	6	4
Allentown-Bethlehem, PA	7	29
Bakersfield, CA	8	12
Little Rock, AR	9	6
Richmond, VA	10	17

The Ten Least Unequal Regions	Inequality Ranking	Creativity Ranking
Tacoma, WA	42	36
Scranton-Wilkes-Barre, PA	41	37
Fort Wayne, IN	40	40
Stockton, CA	39	35
Wichita, KS	38	24
Napa, CA	37	18
Toledo, OH	36	34
Greenville-Spartanburg, SC	35	38
Youngstown, OH	34	42
Mobile, AL	33	15

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importing hotbeds like the Bay Area and San Diego have thrived in California, home of tax revolt, where public funding shortfalls often have held back local public-education upgrades. An obvious long-term danger looms: If too many regions begin to rely too heavily on imported talent rather than growing their own, the whole process peters out. Our national economic competitiveness declines.

And though immigrants are valuable, neither can we rely too heavily on importing talent from abroad. At some of our elite universities, one-third to one-half of the seats in graduate engineering programs are filled by foreign-born students, and their numbers in many skilled occupations are rising as well. Curtailing immigration so that "our own people" can have more good jobs and classroom seats is not a viable solution; our economy needs immigrants. What we must do is tap more of our own vast human resources.

Rankings of Income Inequality

Small Regions

The most creative regions are also the most unequal, and vice-versa

Rankings of 79 metro areas reporting populations 250,000 to 500,000

The Ten Most Unequal Regions	Inequality Ranking	Creativity Ranking
Stamford, CT	1	14
Boulder, CO	2	1
Huntsville, AL	3	38
Tallahassee, FL	4	6
Dutchess County, NY	5	7
Lowell, MA	6	12
Corpus Christi, TX	7	36.
Melbourne, FL	8	22
Bridgeport, CT	9	18
Augusta, GA	10	37

The Ten Least Unequal Regions	Inequality Ranking	Creativity Ranking
Hickory, NC	79	61
Rockford, IL	78	60
Chattanooga, TN	77	53
Evansville, KY	76	74
Appleton-Oshkosh, WI	75	76
Fayetteville, AR	74	57
Springfield, MO	73	68
York, PA	72	77
Salem, OR	71	46
Ocala, FL	70	67

Stop Subsidizing Stagnation

The new creative economy is still emerging. In that sense, we're in a period much like that of the late 1920s and 1930s, when the emerging corporate-industrial system faltered with a stock market crash and subsequent depression. It took nearly two decades and a world war to put in place the national policy initiatives that "completed" that system and spurred a golden age of economic growth—initiatives ranging from the labor-union-empowering Wagner Act and the GI Bill to federally guaranteed long-term mortgages to federally funded highway construction. The task now is not to replicate what worked last time, but to devise policies for the creative age that will have a similar effect. So, in the spirit of encouraging partisan competition and creative dialogue, let me offer a framework for thinking about our economic future.

First, we need an education system that develops and harnesses the creative talent of all our people. The current K-12 system is a vestige of the old mass-production age and is beyond tinkering with. The current education reform movement is laudable, but must be taken to its logical conclusion. No one wants to admit this openly, but we're already headed toward effective federal government takeover of troubled public schools. It was George W. Bush, after all, who passed the most federally intrusive education bill in American history, the No Child Left Behind Act. Only a national strategy can repair the now broken connection between good local schools and regional prosperity.

Education reform must also, at its core, make schools into places where human creativity is cultivated and can flourish. With the same zeal that schools and communities across the United States have embraced athletics and fitness, they now need to embrace creativity. We revel in the legendary stories of young creators like Michael Dell building new businesses in dorm rooms, or in the garage, in their spare time. The question to ask is: Why are they doing these things in their *spare* time? Isn't this the real stuff of education in the creative age? One person I interviewed told me that he'd bought his kids drums and guitars, and encouraged them to form a band, just because he thought it might keep them home at night and out of trouble. He'd never imagined, he said, that they would go on to learn useful skills by looking for and booking gigs and then producing and marketing

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their CDs. This kind of activity needs to be encouraged in schools.

Second, we must make increasing the number of creative jobs and opportunities the guiding principle of national economic policy. Right now, both parties are stuck in ideological and interest-group-driven modes of thinking that often have the opposite effect. The Bush administration's economic "vision" is essentially to provide subsidies and regulatory favors to older industries from steel to airlines to the energy and defense sectors. More often than not these industries are located in Red-state areas that support the GOP, and they also tend to have the most well-heeled lobbies. At best, the administration's protective favors squander precious public funds in ways that add few entrepreneurial or creative jobs. At worst, they actually undermine such jobs—giving antitrust relief to Microsoft, for instance, and greater monopoly power to regional phone companies at the expense of emerging broadband providers.

The old American Dream was a job with which to feed your family. The new Dream is a job you love, with which to feed your family. The political party that best understands this dream, and can make it a reality, will be the party that thrives, and makes America thrive.

Democrats, on the other hand, who tend to represent Blue-state regions where creative industries reside—from the entertainment centers around Hollywood to high-tech hotspots like Boston's Route 128—ought therefore to be natural allies of the creative economy. Instead they, too, are prone to fall into the protectionist trap. For instance, Democrats are now helping Hollywood media conglomerates crush some of the most innovative new entertainment technologies like music and video file sharing on the Internet—precisely the kinds of technologies that will breed the new creative jobs of the future. (See "Hollywood and Whine," by Brendan I. Koerner, *The Washington Monthly*, January/February.) And for those people left out of the creative economy, Democrats continue proposing the benefits-and-assistance programs that will surely help, but will not tap people's creative abilities and give them a real chance to join the game.

Third, perhaps the nonprofit sector can play an expanded role in our creative economy. Nonprofit organizations—like most basic-research labs, and like the magazine you're reading—give people chances to be creative, free from the market's pressure to maximize investor returns. Are there any creative ideas on how to instigate more of this sort of thing, and more broadly?

Finally, we must remain an open society, in every sense. We can't close our borders as a knee-jerk response to terrorism fears. Those foreign-born scientists, engineers, and other immigrants really are vital. Creative workers worldwide are mobile; they'll go where there is opportunity and where they are welcomed. And now other countries are positioning themselves to siphon off this talent.

The Bush administration is in danger of hurting us on this front. Our policies of unilateralism and preemption—combined with tighter restrictions on immigration, and tighter scrutiny and control over key flows of information—are billed as necessary for security. But carried too far, they weaken our hand in competing for talent. In a very real sense, America's economic security is as important as its military security. Superpowers don't usually fall by military attack. They fail by growing socially and economically stagnant: Remember the Soviet Union? The Ottoman Empire, the Spanish Empire, the medieval Chinese Empire? At some point each focused on protecting turf or maintaining the status quo; they stopped innovating.

America is far better positioned to survive and prosper in the new creative environment than were these other civilizations. Despite the current hard times, our still-growing rates of productivity suggest that our ability to innovate—and to bring out the creative potential of many people—remains strong. But if we don't take our creative strengths to the next level, with policies that bring more citizens into the creative sectors, America will begin to lag behind. Getting us to the next level will require real political imagination and leadership, guided by a new political vision rooted in an understanding of our new economic situation. The old American Dream was a job with which to feed your family. The new Dream is a job *you love*, with which to feed your family. The political party that best understands this dream, and can make it a reality, will be the party that thrives, and makes America thrive. ●

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Art by Bruce Bolinger

"If it's Tuesday, this must be Baghdad."

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G.I. Woe

Three years ago, George W. Bush charged that U.S. troops were being intolerably overburdened. Today, our men and women in uniform are stretched even thinner —and it's about to get much worse.

By Nicholas Confessore

During the fall of 1999, George W. Bush, then the governor of Texas and a leading candidate for the Republican presidential nomination, introduced what would become a staple of his stump speech over the following year. Appearing at The Citadel military academy, Bush painted a grim picture of the U.S. armed forces under Bill Clinton. "Not since the years before Pearl Harbor has our investment in national defense been so low as a percentage of GNP," Bush told the crowd that day. "Yet rarely has our military been so freely used." Bush accused the Clinton administration not only of underfunding the military—a perennial conservative complaint—but also of overburdening it with unnecessary deployments. "Resources are over-stretched," he charged. "Frustration is up, as families are separated and strained. Morale is down. Recruitment is more difficult. And many of our best people in the military are headed for civilian life."

There was an element of truth to his charge. By the late 1990s, the number of active-duty men and women under arms had decreased from more than 2 million during the Gulf War to just under 1.4 million, much of it due to planned post-Cold War drawdowns begun under Bush's father. Yet during the same period, the military had faced a major new deployment roughly every six months—most of them operations, like Haiti or Somalia, that were layered on top of the post-Cold-War requirement that the Pentagon be able to fight two major regional wars at once.

All these deployments profoundly changed the lives of tens of thousands of soldiers, including Brian Wells, a staff sergeant with the 10th Mountain Division. Wells joined the 10th Mountain in 1998, moving his family to the division's home base at Fort Drum, N.Y. The following year, as U.S. forces bombed Kosovo, he spent a month away from his family at Fort Polk, La., participating in the arduous war games that bring soldiers to peak preparedness. Immediately after, he was deployed to Bosnia for four months; on his eldest son's first day of kindergarten, Wells was on peacekeeping duty outside Tuzla. A year later, he headed back to Louisiana for more exercises. Like most soldiers, Wells enjoyed being in the military. But between his deployment, exercises, training, and time spent at battle schools, military life was becoming grueling. His wife and two sons, now aged 2 and 6, didn't see him as often as they'd like. "With all the different situations around the world with different countries," Wells told me last January, speaking in the clipped cadence of a 10-year military veteran and the flat vowels of his native Chicago, "it just kept adding on and adding on and adding on."

Bush gained office in part by pledging to relieve soldiers like Wells from the onerous burdens the Clinton administration had imposed by, among other things, reconsidering the U.S. presence in the Balkans. Yet military life hasn't gotten easier since Bush took

Nicholas Confessore *is an editor of* The Washington Monthly.

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office; indeed, it's gotten measurably harder. For Wells, the war on terrorism has meant "more frequent deployments, less time at home"—not just more missions, but more time training for them and the constant pressure of being on a permanent war footing. "Since the war on terrorism has expanded so quickly and so vastly, you never know when, or where, you're going to go," he says. Wells spent five months in Afghanistan after September 11 and did yet another stint in Louisiana this past fall. "I missed all four of our birthdays, the anniversaries, major holidays. 2002—gone. No birthday parties, no Christmas, nothing." Orders to deploy to the Middle East could come any day.

More military spending, it turns out, hasn't made life any easier. The extra $70 billion a year the Bush administration has pumped into the Pentagon has bought more smart bombs and slightly fatter paychecks. But it hasn't bought a much bigger military force. There are only about 27,000 more active-duty troops today than in 2000—and even with those additions, the military is more overstretched now than it was when Bush took office. During the first three months of this year, the United States had more than twice as many troops on overseas missions at any given time as it did in 2000. It's getting harder to recruit new soldiers, and, on the whole, harder to keep the ones we have. The Army is so short of some specialties that it has imposed stop-loss on about 50,000 troops—that is, refused to let them retire or resign—while in Jan-

Bad Lieutenants

WHILE THE MILITARY HAS too few enlisted men and women, it has way too many officers, particularly at the middle and senior ranks. The problem dates back to the years after World War II, when the decision was made to keep enough officers in uniform to form the skeleton of a large wartime army. In theory, keeping extra officers around would allow the Pentagon to quickly ramp up its enlisted ranks in case of another major war. But by the late 1980s, the corps had become so bloated that a study by the Pentagon's Inspector General found that half of all military headquarters were superfluous. (Topping the list were commands in such choice locales as Key West, Fla. and Hawaii.) And even today, with dim prospects for a global war, every service except the Marines has more officers per enlisted men than it did in 1989.

The resulting problems are familiar to anyone who's served in the military since Vietnam. To give all those officers something to do, the Pentagon runs a larger bureaucracy than it really needs. Minor decisions get kicked up the command ladder; middle-grade officers do work that junior officers should be doing, depriving the latter of opportunities to develop real leadership experience. Many of them get frustrated and leave, especially in the Army. Mark Lewis, a former Ranger officer who now studies officer attrition, has documented that the rate of attrition among captains doubled between 1995 and 2000. In recent years, to make up for the loss, the Army has been quickly promoting large numbers of lieutenants—which, paradoxically, further reduces the quality and experience of those officers, who lead most of the smaller units seeing action in places like Afghanistan. The military gets the worst of both worlds: Too many middle- and senior-level officers shuffling paper, and inexperienced junior officers leading troops.

Officer bloat doesn't just waste money and manpower. It also contributes to the stress and turbulence of military life. Since there's a surplus of officers, those who wish to be promoted can't afford to risk having any black marks on their record, feeding what grunts call a "zero-defects" mentality. John Tillson, an analyst at the Institute for Defense Analyses, recently visited an Apache helicopter unit at Fort Bragg in North Carolina. "One of the things that commander told me was that he had established higher material readiness requirements for his Apaches than they had in the 18th Airborne Corps or Army-wide," says Tillson "But when I went to talk to his maintenance people, their story is, 'we're working 12 hours a day, six days a week, trying to meet this unbeatable standard.' This is a self-imposed problem by a commander who thinks he's being measured not by his reenlistment rates or satisfaction of the people in his unit, but by what a good job he does maintaining the readiness rates of his aircraft. What he's doing is he's driving these people right out of the Army."

Reform advocates suggest cutting the officer corps down to a mere 5 percent of active duty forces, the model for the most successful armies in history. That would give officers more time with particular units and push decision making down instead of up; the junior officers now fleeing the military might find service more rewarding, while enlisted men would have fewer promotion-obsessed leaders.

—*N.C.*

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uary, the Marine Corps imposed a 12-month stop-loss order on the entire service. Large swathes of the U.S. military thus no longer meet the definition of a volunteer force. Nor, increasingly, do the reserves. Since September 11, thousands have been serving for long stretches, far from home, to meet the country's growing homeland-security requirements and to fill in the gaps left by active-duty soldiers deployed elsewhere in the world. Their employers are grumbling, and their families are griping.

The average man in uniform, in other words, is more frustrated and overburdened today than he was two years ago—affecting not just the soldiers themselves, but their ability to protect the rest of us. "The great majority of Army combat units are not ready for combat without significant additional training," wrote Lt. Col. Tim Reese, a respected commander who led a U.S. tank battalion in Kosovo, in *Armor* magazine last summer. Our capability and security has already begun to suffer. Because Army troops weren't able to deploy quickly enough, the first ground forces in landlocked Afghanistan last year were Marines, specialists in amphibious assault. During the U.S.-led battle at Tora Bora and Operation Anaconda, the brass was both unwilling and unable to deploy enough troops to encircle the enemy, allowing hundreds of Taliban and al Qaeda fighters to escape to neighboring Pakistan, including, possibly, Osama bin Laden.

Things are about to get much worse. During the last two months, President Bush has ordered some 87,000 of America's overstretched soldiers to the Persian Gulf, where they joined a force of roughly equal magnitude already preparing for war in Iraq. As many as 250,000 U.S. troops will take part in an eventual invasion of Iraq, on top of those already peacekeeping, battling terrorism, and guarding American interests around the world. Fighting a war, of course, is the military's primary purpose. But when the shooting stops, about 75,000 of those soldiers will need to stay behind—twice as many as are currently stationed in South Korea to deter an invasion from the North, and more than 12 times the dwindling number serving in Bosnia and Kosovo.

That can only mean decreased readiness, shrinking re-enlistments, lower morale, and, quite possibly, more mistakes like the one at Tora Bora. Today's military is "like a football team playing back to back games in overtime with no practice or rest time," says Maj. Donald Vandergriff, an ROTC instructor at Georgetown University and a leading expert on the military's personnel crisis. "They may win one week, but they can't win the next week because they're exhausted." Today's force, say reformers, needs a top-to-bottom change in the way it recruits, structures, and deploys its men and women in uniform in order to meet new threats. Anything less puts those troops, and the rest of us, in danger. Yet the Bush administration has so far avoided the tough internal battles that will be needed to remake America's overstretched military. Instead, the president is poised to use America's overstretched military to remake the world.

President Bush has never once publicly called upon young Americans to join the military, an omission that has caused some amount of grumbling throughout the ranks.

Apocalypse Now

For most civilians, the notion that a military with 14 million full-time men and women under arms is unduly burdened might seem counterintuitive. But of that number, only a fraction are what are known as "trigger-pullers"—that is, front-line troops in combat divisions. Of the Army's 460,000 soldiers, for instance, only about 120,000 are part of the service's 10 active-duty combat divisions. And only about one-third of each 15,000-man division consists of actual combat troops. Of the rest, most are part of the military's vast overhead and logistics apparatus, from mechanics to quartermasters to secretaries.

In part this is the price the United States pays for global reach; deploying all around the world takes up more resources and man hours than staying at home. (During the Gulf War, according to one estimate, there were more signal troops and truck drivers in Saudi Arabia than there were combat soldiers.) And in part, it's the military's increasing reliance on high-tech equipment, which speeds up the tempo of battle by allowing forces to operate under nearly any conditions and requires a longer logistical "tail" when deployed. Today, the military's overall "tooth to tail" ratio is about 1 to 7—one of the lowest in the world, and getting lower.

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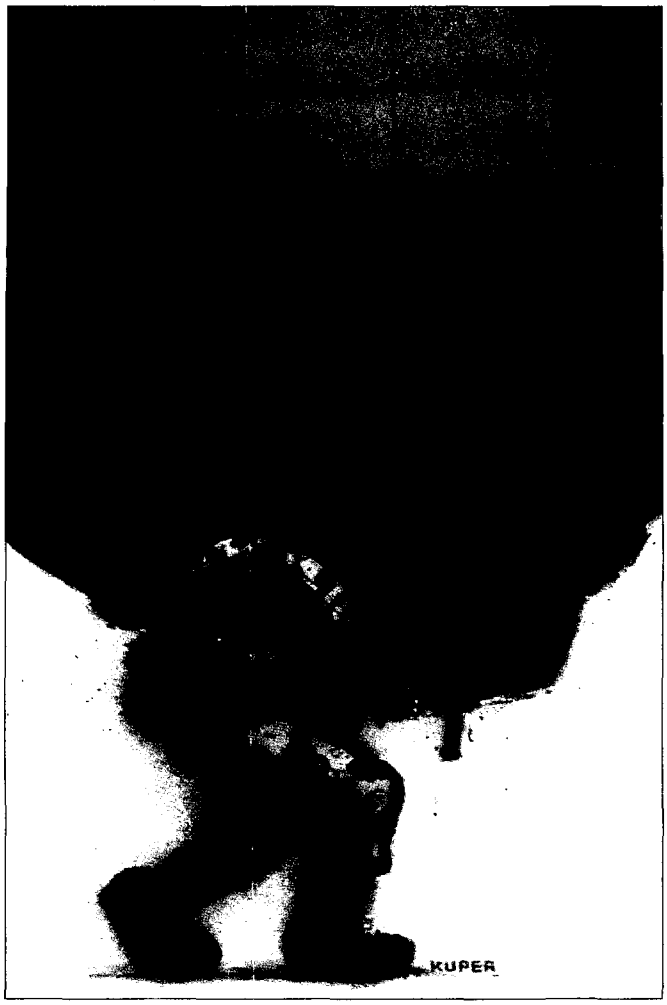
That makes it hard to solve the current overstretch problem in what would seem to be the logical way: increase the number of soldiers. Add a few thousand trigger-pullers, and you have to add seven times that number, on average, in support personnel. Recruiting so many qualified candidates would not only be expensive, but would challenge the current all-volunteer force, already struggling to meet its recruitment goals. (They've done so, but only by spending much more money per recruit than in years past, making it easier to get through basic training, and accepting more convicted felons.) In any event, the Bush administration has refused to approve all the additional manpower the services have requested. The president has never once publicly called upon young Americans to join the military, an omission that has caused some amount of grumbling throughout the ranks. After all, when the Pentagon can't bring in more recruits, those who've already signed up pay the price.



The Longest Days

When the weather cooperates, Fort Drum, home to the 10th Mountain Division, is a little over an hour's drive north of Syracuse, just east of the Adirondacks. During most of the winter, though, storms over Lake Ontario dump loads of snow onto the region, and when I arrived there in the middle of January, the base was a few feet deep in powder. A public affairs officer met me at the front gate—like all U.S. bases, Fort Drum has been a "closed post" since 9/11—and escorted me around in a big SUV, proudly pointing out the video store, on-post schools and playgrounds, and most importantly, rows of tidy family sized houses. The growing number of "enlisted marrieds" in the ranks was an unintended consequence of the military's move to an all-volunteer force in 1973, and the Pentagon has been playing catch-up ever since. Since the early 1990s, millions of dollars have poured into better housing, family services, and especially child care—important when more and more of the country's married soldiers are married to each other. Better housing and pay certainly make military life easier, and the Bush administration has made a point of putting more money into each than the previous administration. But as one recently retired soldier joked to me, a bigger apartment for the family doesn't do you much good if you're never around to see them. Too much time away from home, not low pay, are what usually drive people out of the service. As Wells told me, "This past year, not that I have any gripe, but being married, you get it from your wife."

The pace is easier on soldiers who aren't married, like Ron McGirr, a tall, soft-spoken military police sergeant I met at Fort Drum. But McGirr has another problem: As an MP, his specialty is among those most heavily in demand in the military today, which means he gets deployed again and again. Starting in 1998, McGirr was assigned to a military police company based in Germany; in the middle of his tour there, he spent six months in Kosovo policing Muslim neighborhoods and providing base security for U.S. forces. "When I first came in, it took three years before you deployed for anything other than exercises," he said, as winter-camouflaged troops tramped

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through deep snowdrifts outside. But now, he pointed out, frequent deployments—sometimes averaging more than one a year—are the norm for new enlistees. September 11 has only quickened the pace; McGirr, whose responsibilities as an MP include on-post security, was especially busy after U.S. bases abroad went into permanent lockdown. Then, a few months after the attacks, he was reassigned to the 10th Mountain Division, arriving at Fort Drum in late January. Just 10 days later he was deployed to Afghanistan to build bunkers and guard Taliban prisoners of war.

The problem is not just the increasing number of missions, but the decades-old system by which soldiers are organized and deployed. Since before World War I, the military has used a centralized personnel management scheme, known as the individual replacement system, originally designed to fight what military wonks today call "second-generation" warfare—wars of attrition between industrial nations. Since those conflicts tended to have long lead-ups, what mattered most was how many guys you could get to the front line, rather than how fast you could get them there. Consequently, readiness was primarily measured by a given unit's "fill"—how many troops it could deploy—instead of how much time those soldiers had spent training together. Soldiers, in turn, were viewed as interchangeable cogs in a machine, to be replaced as needed like spare parts. And to make it easier to organize and administer those modern armies in garrison, units were kept "branch-pure;" that is, tanks in one battalion, infantry in another, engineers in still another.

The system came in for criticism almost as soon as it was inaugurated, but though warfighting has changed dramatically since 1917, the individual replacement system remains in place today. If the 3rd Infantry Division is assigned to deploy, say, a brigade combat team—usually three battalions of between 500 and 900 men each, plus headquarters and support assets—to the Middle East, that team is built essentially ad hoc, from the ground up. To fill the units being deployed, the Army cannibalizes other units for personnel—often from other bases around the country or around the world. Ideally, such a formation would have months to train together as a team and learn to fight as one, since experience shows that formations that train together for long periods before deployment, developing cohesion and trust, are far more effective in combat. But in the post-Cold War world, most deployments happen on a moment's notice—sometimes a month or two, sometimes less. "When you get down to the unit level, what it means is that for the most part, the formations you are deploying on any given day consist of strangers," says Col. Douglas A. Macgregor, a research fellow at the National Defense University and author of *Breaking the Phalanx*, a bible for military reform advocates.

The more missions the military has, the more it has to move around, reassemble, and retrain its soldiers. And instead of fighting one big war or two medium-sized wars, today's military has lately been charged with lots of minor operations, known as small-scale contingencies, and the occasional medium-sized one, like the upcoming war in Iraq. Even the small-scale contingencies are no picnic. As a 2001 RAND study noted, "Even relatively small operations require large amounts of leadership time, cause turbulence from cross-leveling and tailoring of the force, and require specialized training." It doesn't help that most of the military is still arrayed to fight World War III. A large fraction of the United States' manpower is deployed to permanent garrisons in Germany, South Korea, and Japan. That doesn't mean these troops sit on their hands. (Most of the peacekeeping soldiers in Bosnia and Kosovo, for instance, rotate out of bases in Germany.) But it does mean that many soldiers are primarily trained and organized for battles that will never occur, which means that they must constantly be trained for their actual missions as well, like patrolling Croat neighborhoods in Brcko, and then trained back again to prepare for their theoretical missions, such as battling hordes of Soviet tanks smashing through the Fulda Gap. Perversely, the current system produces units that simultaneously train more and are less ready.

When large numbers of reservists get called for duty, they leave behind understaffed police and fire departments— that is, the same people who are supposed to respond first in the event of a terrorist attack.

It also disrupts soldiers' lives constantly, as they are moved around the world at the last minute to fill

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out units scheduled for deployment. Some researchers estimate that, in any given week, as many as 60,000 soldiers are in transit from one place to another—three times as many soldiers as the Army puts into the Balkans in a given year. (This high "personnel tempo" also adds to the training tempo; since the troops in a given unit constantly turn over, the unit as a whole must train that much more in order to perform well together.) The burden doesn't fall equally, though. Since most of the military is structured to organize over months, for a predictable war, few units are capable of deploying on very short notice. So while the bulk of our heavy, active-duty units are rarely deployed to places like Afghanistan, light units that are rapidly deployable—such as the 10th Mountain division, today the most frequently deployed in the Army—get sent to hotspots over and over again. The same goes for individual soldiers: Those with specialties in high demand for peacekeeping and nation-building, including MPs like Ron McGirr, get used more often than they normally would.

The Pentagon has met its recruiting goals only by spending much more money per enlistment, making it easier to pass basic training, and accepting more convicted felons than it used to.

All of this goes a long way toward explaining why the same military that won the Gulf War without too much trouble gets stressed out keeping up a few peacekeeping and antiterrorism deployments that take up a fraction of its manpower. But when the dust settles, occupied Iraq will require more of what Bush's advisers once derided as "social work" than the Balkans and Afghanistan combined. If putting a few thousand U.S. troops into Bosnia every six months is difficult, imagine the strain of keeping tens of thousands of personnel in an occupied Iraq, year after year.

A Farewell to Arms

The most visible symptom of overstretch, however, is its effects on the Guard and Reserves, who make up a little less than half of the Pentagon's available personnel and two-thirds of the Army's. In daily life, reservists (the term applies to members both of the Guard and the Reserves) are civilian citizens, many of them doctors, police, firemen, or nurses. When the military can't meet deployments with active duty personnel, they call up reserve units and individual reservists, who must take leave from work and family at a moment's notice. Three-quarters of U.S. Special Forces in Afghanistan today are National Guardsmen, for instance, in part to free up active-duty troops to prepare for war in Iraq.

Most of the reserves, however, consist not of combat troops but of logistics and support soldiers who undergird the big combat deployments—from engineers and MPs to civil affairs officers and truck drivers. Indeed, nearly all of these specialties are concentrated in the part-time reserve forces, rather than the active duty force. Unfortunately, those are the same specialties most needed in peacekeeping and humanitarian deployments, where the bulk of the work isn't duking it out with enemy infantry but establishing constabulary forces, providing clean water, and fixing bombed-out power grids. So, ever since the Persian Gulf War, the Pentagon has leaned more and more heavily on the reserves—using them as a crutch to avoid reconfiguring the active-duty force away from the heavy divisions that remain the Army's pride and joy. Today, the reserves are increasingly indistinguishable from the active-duty force, with a growing number of reservists and guardsmen serving for months at a time. "The National Guard and Reserve did not sign up with the idea that they would be fully integrated into the active Army," says Ramon Nadel, a retired Army colonel who now teaches combat leadership. "And the more operations other than war that we have, the more the reserves get pulled away."

"We call up the reserves basically because we can," says John Tillson, a researcher at the Institute for Defense Analyses who studies the effects of operations tempo on soldiers. "Since we have all these tempo problems, we need to find some way to mitigate them. It's easier to call up the reserves than to change the personnel system." Even before September 11 the reserves were overstretched; since the early 1990s, the number of reservist "duty days" has nearly tripled, from more than 5 million to around 13 million per year. But the situation has gotten drastically worse since September 11. Pentagon officials estimate that since then, reservists have served

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between 30 and 40 million duty days, about what they contributed at the height of the Gulf War. By the beginning of this year, more than 124,000 reservists had been called up for duty during the course of Operation Enduring Freedom—nearly as many as have cycled through Bosnia, Kosovo, and the post-Desert Storm operations combined. "You will find reservists, particularly Army reservists and National Guard guys, who have served in Somalia, Haiti, Kosovo, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Kuwait," says G.I. Wilson, a recently retired Marine colonel.

Pretty soon, they'll be able to add Iraq to that list. The active-duty force has, for instance, exactly one civil-affairs battalion—that is, the specialists who set up courts and train police forces in the wake of a conflict. The other 97 percent of the Army's civil-affairs specialists are in the reserves. Once the shooting stops, these and other elements of our already overstretched reserve force will bear the brunt of rebuilding, caring for, and policing Iraq. And when they get called up for duty, they'll leave behind understaffed police stations and fire departments. A survey conducted by the Police Executive Research Forum found that half of all law enforcement agencies in the United States have already lost personnel to reserve call-ups since September 11, while another, conducted by the International Association of Fire Chiefs found that more than 70 percent of fire departments have members in the reserves. "We have only two paid firefighters," noted one response to the latter survey. "Both have been called."

Of course, police and firefighters are also the front-line responders in case of terrorist attacks on American soil (attacks that will be more likely, according to recent CIA reports, if U.S. troops invade Iraq). Therefore, stretching the already overburdened reserves to fight Saddam might not only increase the danger to U.S. soldiers, but to the rest of us at home.

A Few Good Men

Today's military is at the breaking point. Active-duty troops have fewer opportunities to build camaraderie with their fellow soldiers, spend less and less time at home, and have more and more unpredictable schedules. Reservists suffer trouble at their daytime jobs, lose employment opportunities, and endure deployments away from home far longer than the ones they expected when they signed up. It's a downward spiral; soldiers driven too hard and deployed too often will eventually choose not to re-enlist, compounding the personnel shortage and increasing the burden on those who stay. And there are only three ways to fix it.

One is to rapidly pull back our overseas commitments, as Bush promised to do during the 2000 campaign. The fact that we still have troops in Bosnia and Kosovo indicates not only that Clinton was right to put them there in the first place, but also that peacekeeping in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and elsewhere is likely to remain a big part of the Pentagon's mission for the foreseeable future. The United States can't stop fighting the war on terrorism, either. Since 9/11, in addition to Afghanistan and the Middle East, we've deployed troops to Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, the Philippines, Colombia, and several other terrorism hot spots. And whether or not one supports the idea of a war against Iraq, the United States needs a military capable of combating terrorism, meeting its peacekeeping commitments, and fighting a major regional war all at the same time. (If not in Iraq, then perhaps on the Korean peninsula.)

That leaves two other possibilities: Increase troop levels, or use the soldiers we have more efficiently. So far, the former has been a wash. But at the prodding of Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Evan Bayh (D-Ind.), President Bush recently signed into law a provision for shorter enlistment terms to attract more college students. That could help reverse the decline, since what's killing the recruiting offices right now is college. The Pentagon rightly doesn't want recruits without at least a high-school education; the problem is that a rapidly growing percentage of high school graduates are going on to become college students, who in turn are increasingly unlikely to enlist. Unless the military can recruit more college grads, its manpower crisis will continue. Research by Charles Moskos, the eminent military sociologist, suggests that shorter enlistment terms appeal to college graduates, who tend to marry later than the high-school grads (which means they will be less prone to family pressures while in service) and are typically better-educated than the current recruit (which means they can be trained faster). To get maximum benefit from the new short enlistment option, John Tillson suggests grouping cohorts of college students from the same region or university, who would train and deploy together overseas on short-term enlistments. Such groups could provide cohesive, highly motivated units for many of the military's undermanned specialties. They could even form the basis of a new U.S. force dedicated exclusively to peacekeeping and nation-building abroad, relieving soldiers with perishable combat skills from the work.

And what if recruiting more college students on

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a voluntary basis doesn't provide a substantial number of new enlistees—as is very likely? Then the Bush administration might want to consider a more radical approach: Draft them. Every year, a million young adults begin attending four-year colleges. As a condition of admission, those students could be required to serve their country for up to two years, in civilian national service programs like AmeriCorps, or homeland security efforts such as guarding nuclear plants, or in one of Tillson's cohort units in the military. Some percentage would choose the latter, especially if they were to receive more G.I. Bill-type college aid as a reward for higher-risk duty. (See Paul Glastris's "First Draft," page 11.)

If the Bush administration can't find a way to increase the number of personnel, they'll need to try the last solution: Change the way the military is organized so that it can commit more of the men and women we have in uniform to the right kinds of jobs, while utilizing them more efficiently and effectively than before. Fixing this problem may be the hardest battle of all, but it's not impossible. Pulling most of our troops from Germany, for instance, would free up perhaps 40,000 soldiers for work elsewhere; as it is, says Douglas Macgregor, "You have commitments that are strategically irrelevant competing with commitments that are strategically unavoidable." Shifting at least one of the Army's heavy combat divisions to the reserves, and replacing it with more active duty service support troops like MPs, would help lessen the burden on reservists.

More fundamentally, say reformers, the World War I-era individual replacement system must be scrapped. In his widely read book of last year, *The Path to Victory: America's Army and the Revolution in Human Affairs*, Vandergriff recommends replacing that system with what's known as unit-manning. Under this system, units would be kept intact, with the same personnel and officers, for a three-year life cycle consisting of training, deployment, and rest phases. A unit-manning system would give soldiers more predictable lives, since they'd know well in advance when they'd be deployed and when they'd be at home. The units produced would be more cohesive, and thus more flexible, requiring less time to train up to specific missions and having a higher overall readiness level. And they wouldn't look anything like today's units. Macgregor's book, *Breaking the Phalanx*, recommends replacing divisions and brigades with 5,000-man formations designed to deploy quickly and fight as a module. Instead of today's branch-pure units, which must be assembled, like Legos, into a given formation, you'd have a range of set formations designed and trained to field certain capabilities rather than specific troop types.

Many of these reforms have been attempted at one time or another in the past—and snuffed out by the existing military bureaucracy, since those who have successfully navigated to the top of the existing system oppose changing it. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, to his credit, has advocated unit manning and more flexible formations in speeches and reports during the last two years. In reaction to Vandergriff's book, the Army, under the direction of Secretary of the Army Thomas White and the Vice Chief of Staff, Gen. John Keane, has formed a Unit Manning Task Force to study how to move away from the individual replacement system. Unfortunately, the head of the task force was recently transferred to a new post, leaving it "effectively dead," according to John Tillson. The Army's Chief of Staff, Gen. Eric Shinseki, discussed the zero-defects culture at an Army conference in April 2001, and has been a vocal supporter of the need to shift the service to smaller, more flexible units. But these moves haven't yet blossomed, in part because the resistance is so stiff, and in part because Rumsfeld's office has focused most of its political capital on the so-called Revolution in Military Affairs—that is, machines, not men. "We say it stands for 'Raging Military Acquisition,'" says G.I. Wilson. "I applaud Rumsfeld for trying to do transformation, but we're not looking for tactical or operational solutions. We solely rely on technological and acquisitions solutions, because that means more money for Boeing, TRW, SCIC. We seek solutions that generate profit, income, or contracts in congressional districts. We're more worried about the hardware, than having people to operate it."

And it's people who win battles, not just hardware. Bush didn't create the military overstretch, but he did campaign on fixing it, and instead has allowed it to worsen. The soldiers at Fort Drum, like American soldiers around the world, didn't join the military to stay at home; they will deploy willingly, even gladly, wherever and as often as their commander-in-chief asks them to. But driving men and women in uniform to the breaking point isn't leadership—it's a way to get them killed. Three years ago, candidate Bush charged the preceding administration with wanting things both ways: "To command great forces, without supporting them. To launch today's new causes, with little thought of tomorrow's consequences." He should heed his own warning.

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Giving Mirth

For today's women writers, balancing work and family is agony. For Jean Kerr, it was an art form.

BY ELIZABETH AUSTIN

JEAN KERR WAS THE EPITOME OF THE GREAT gal, back in an era of great gals. With her best-selling book, *Please Don't Eat the Daisies*, she created a persona that was competent, funny, self-assured, calm in the face of domestic emergency, unapologetically competitive on the tennis court, and tremendously gifted when it came to keeping a houseful of youngsters happily occupied on a rainy afternoon. Even in the '50s and early '60s, during Kerr's heyday, that image of the harried but happy mom occasionally smacked of the emotional airbrush. But with Kerr's death in January, we have lost not only a great author, but also a sunny (if wry) view of motherhood that now appears extinct.

Kerr was an essayist and hugely successful Broadway playwright, wife of *The New York Times*' Pulitzer Prize-winning theater critic Walter Kerr, and mother of six lively children. Now that almost all of her books are out of print, however, she may be best known as the Doris Day character in the treacly 1960 film version of *Please Don't Eat the Daisies*, which erases Kerr's extraordinary literary career and morphs her into a home remodeling-obsessed, suburban stay-at-home mom. While the movie's producers may have been trying to streamline Kerr's discursive collection of essays into a standard-issue Hollywood plotline, the result completely misses the point of Kerr's work: She wrote about combining work and family at a time when that was still an unusual choice for an upper-middle-class mother. And unlike so many of today's literary moms, whose prose is blanketed in a perpetual fog of maternal self-righteousness, Kerr was blessedly unsmarmy and unsmug.

In reading Kerr, I always imagined her as the ideal next-door neighbor, someone who—armed only with a teapot, a couple of macaroons, and a medicinal bottle of Scotch—could transform your backed-up sewer drain from a heart- and budget-breaking disaster into prime anecdotal material. When Kerr wrote about homemaking, childrearing, and writing (and that sometimes thorny point in the Venn diagram where all three intersect), she always sounded like a smart, funny woman who was enjoying herself enormously. Although her best-known essays are now almost 50 years old, they still strike a deep chord with anyone who's ever sat huddled on the playground sidelines, keeping a weather eye on the teeter-totter crowd while scribbling furiously on a big yellow pad.

Bemused Spouses

I was a freshman in high school when I discovered Jean Kerr. To say her books changed my life is an understatement; I embraced them as a design for living. For an adolescent struggling with the apparent conundrum of being funny, smart, and female, Kerr's books were clear, convincing evidence that it was possible to combine effortless intelligence (you've got to love a writer who opens a book of essays on family life with a joke about Kierkegaard) with the nitty-gritty details of domesticity. Her 1961 play *Mary, Mary* spoke directly to my teen anxieties about the unlikelihood that a wisecracking bookworm might ever find true love. (Dorothy Parker, whom I discovered at around the same time, had not been reassuring on this point.) In the play, Mary's sharp-edged wit has driven her husband, Bob, into the arms of a more curvaceous, less challenging rival. As he explains to a friend, "I married Mary because she was so direct and straightforward and said just exactly what she meant." When asked why they divorced, he explains: "Because she was so direct and straightforward and said just exactly what she meant."

In the end, Mary learns to hold her tongue—at least long enough for a big clinch or two—and true love prevails. This plot was calculated to bring hope to the lovelorn, which explains why *Mary, Mary* ran for more than 1,500 performances on Broadway and remains a perennial choice

ELIZABETH AUSTIN *is a Chicago writer.*

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in community theatre. But what I found most encouraging was the story behind the story: All of Mary's witty lines (and everyone else's, for that matter) had sprung from the fertile brain of Jean Kerr—who had a swell husband, lots of great kids, and lived in a castle right on Long Island Sound, with a full-time housekeeper, no less.

Although *Please Don't Eat the Daisies* was published in 1957, before I was born, Kerr's effortless ability to straddle the whole career-versus-motherhood divide seemed as timely as (and far more lively than) the long shelves full of the "I Am Woman, Hear Me Roar" genre I devoured as a teen. Kerr offers no explanation, much less apology, for including a chapter on "The Care and Feeding of Producers" alongside "How to Get the Best of Your Children" and "Aunt Jean's Marshmallow Fudge Diet."

I don't need a writer to tell me how hard it is to raise children; trust me, I already know. What I need is one who will refocus my attention on the sheer delights of sharing your life with babies—and teenagers, too.

The book takes its overly whimsical title from a characteristic Kerr passage, in which she translates her children's unexpected misconduct into bemusing anecdote:

"My real problem with children is that I haven't any imagination. I'm always warning them against the common-place defections while they are planning the bizarre and unusual. Christopher gets up ahead of the rest of us on Sunday mornings and he has long since been given a list of clear directives: 'Don't wake the baby,' 'Don't go outside in your pajamas,' 'Don't eat cookies before breakfast.' But I never told him, 'Don't make flour paste and glue together all the pages of the magazine section of the Sunday *Times*.' Now I tell him, of course.

"And then last week I had a dinner party and told the twins and Christopher not to go in the living room, not to use the guest towels in the bathroom, and not to leave the bicycles on the front step. However, I neglected to tell them not to eat the daisies on the dining-room table. This was a serious omission, as I discovered when I came upon my centerpiece—a charming three-point arrangement of green stems."

Some of Kerr's observations seem timeless: "In the beginning, we made the usual mistake of looking at houses we could afford. I am working on a proposition, hereafter to be known as Kerr's law, which states in essence: All the houses you can afford to buy are depressing." Others now feel a bit dated, but only in the way that all quotidian-based humor is dated, as Robert Benchley's sidesplitting musings are firmly rooted in the '20s, and Nora Ephron's early essays eternally evoke the '70s.

Kerr's essays made the combination of literature and motherhood seem as easy as falling off a log—and far less likely to result in broken bones. She cheerily tried to persuade her readers that jotting down paragraphs between carpool runs is actually the optimal way to write. "I will read anything rather than work," she confessed. "For this reason, and because I have four boys, I do about half of my 'work' in the family car, parked alongside a sign that says 'Littering is Punishable by a $50 Fine' ... Out in the car, where I freeze to death or roast to death depending on the season, all is serene. The few things there are to read in the front-seat area (Chevrolet, E-gasoline-F, 100-temp-200) I have long since committed to memory. So there is nothing to do but write, after I have the glove compartment tidied up."

Aunt Jean's Blueprint for Happiness

From her works, I distilled what she might have called "Aunt Jean's Blueprint for Happiness": Find a nice, literate husband, buy a tumbledown Victorian house, fill it with clever, mischievous children and big slobbery dogs with whimsical names, and spend your leisure moments tossing off witty little essays on the hilarious vicissitudes of domestic life. (After some years of putting these principles into practice, I called Jean Kerr—allegedly to interview her for a newspaper article, but actually to complain that it is far funnier to read about collapsing plaster, incontinent canines, and impertinent toddlers than it is to deal with them on a daily basis. She was suitably apologetic, and freely admitted that she had edited out some of the less amusing aspects of both homemaking and publishing. However, she callously declined my suggestion that a prominent warning label be added to any future editions.)

Once I'd gobbled my way through Kerr's slim oeuvre, I went looking eagerly for another writer just as good. Decades later, I'm still looking. No one since has managed to write about the domestic scene with Mrs. Kerr's pitch-perfect balance of wit, warmth, and intelligence. Instead, the mother/writers of the half-century have focused on the anxieties and stresses of parenting. Per-

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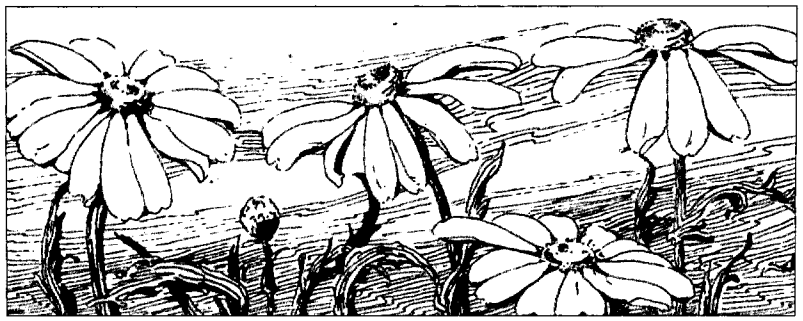
sonally, I don't need anybody to tell me how hard it is to bring up a child; trust me, I already know. What I really need is someone who will refocus my attention on the sheer, unalloyed delights of sharing your life with babies—and teenagers, too.



Although Erma Bombeck was just five years younger than Kerr, her career peaked in the '70s with such dismally titled bestsellers as *The Grass is Always Greener over the Septic Tank; If Life is a Bowl of Cherries, What Am I Doing in the Pits?; I Lost Everything in the Post-Natal Depression.* Her wisecracking, *oy-veh* approach to life guaranteed her a huge audience, although it didn't do much for the psyche of the American mother. It's downright dispiriting to read much Bombeck. Her world is one of unappreciated, unfulfilled wives and mothers drudging away year after year, hoping to receive that one glimmer of recognition that will make it all worthwhile.

The opening of one chapter in *Cherries*, titled "I'm Laughing So Hard I Can't Stop Crying," is typical:

"The last time my family laughed was when my oven caught fire.

"I did not get these varicose veins in my neck from whispering. We shout at one another. We say hateful things. We cry, slam doors, goof off, make mistakes, experience disappointments, tragedies, sickness, and traumas. When I last checked, we were members in good standing of your basic screw-up family.

"There is a thin line that separates laughter and pain, comedy and tragedy, humor and hurt.

"And how do you know laughter if there is no pain to compare it with." (That quote, whether intentionally or not, ends with a period, not a question mark.)

Bombeck's fans could argue that she was more honest about the challenges of family life. In a column titled "Big-Time Guilt," Bombeck recorded her profound dismay at finding herself pregnant again at 40, caroming oddly between one-liners and gut-spilling. "It wasn't fair," she raged. "What did I have to look forward to? Lamb-stained bibs, sleepless nights, Girl Scout cookies, Show and Tell, car pools, field trips, fevers at midnight." The column moved on to her eventual acceptance and love for the unborn child, and ends with the sad story of her miscarriage. It's revealing that Bombeck refers to her "S and S (Suffering and Sacrifice)," not when she talks about losing the baby, but when she first contemplates raising it.

Kerr never lets us that far inside. She writes mirthfully about raising a bumper crop of children spaced erratically over a couple of decades; there's never the tiniest hint that a 40-ish woman who has spent half a lifetime in the maternal trenches might entertain some mixed feelings about starting over with an infant. When she writes about her last-born baby daughter, all we hear is bemused delight: "She smiled the kind of smile that would give you hope in February. Then she held up her arms and said, very distinctly, 'Hi, little fella.'" We'll never know whether Kerr was guilty of a little retrospective sugar-coating. But I do know which book I'd recommend to an overwhelmed friend facing an unexpected pregnancy post-40.

Certainly, Kerr is far from the only author to write well about life with children. In the 1980s, *New York Times* columnist Anna Quindlen's pieces about her children were heartfelt and evocative; years later, I still remember her brief account of her son's discovery of fireflies on a hot summer night. But her columns were so often strewn with references to the stress of combining motherhood with work, making a two-headed beast of her life, that I often found myself feeling sorry for her.

I sometime wonder what Kerr would have made of *Salon*'s long-running feature, "Mothers Who Think." Did that title refer only to the authors? Or was it a device allowing homebound, cranky readers to feel intellectually superior to those morons on the kindergarten fun fair committee? Sure, MWT offered a good number of interesting and well-written pieces. But the title—like many of the essays in the series—had a chip on its shoulder, as illustrated by the flap copy of the collected MWT essays, which calls them a "testament to the notion that motherhood gives women more to think about, not less." Of course it does; you just have less time to write it all down.

Kerr acknowledged the frustrations of life among the preschool set: "I'm sick of talking about milk," she crabbed ruefully in a passage on her vain attempts to make conversation at the family dinner table. "When do we get to the great topics, like art, music, McLuhan? And what about people like the Kennedys, who, they say, had such brilliant conversation at the dinner table, even when the children were young? How? Didn't those kids get any milk?" But she never whined about it. Nor did she lace

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her prose with backhanded compliments to her own virtuous self-sacrifice.

In some ways, the closest thing we've got to a Jean Kerr for the 21st century is Allison Pearson, author of last year's *I Don't Know How She Does It: The Life of Kate Reddy, Working Mother.* And that's a little sad. Pearson is, if not a better, certainly a more writerly writer than Kerr ever was. Some passages are achingly well-observed. Her infant son, asleep, "looks as though he has hurled himself at unconsciousness, like a very small man trying to leap aboard an accelerating bus."

But the book, for all its wit and intelligence, is filled with defensiveness and distress, as the heroine tries gamely to meet everyone else's standards for Perfect Wife, Perfect Mother, Perfect Daughter, Perfect Daughter-in-Law, Perfect Employee and All-Around Perfect Woman. It's not surprising that so many of us find our lives reflected in Pearson's pages; we're engaged in those same futile struggles.

Gal Power

The thing I most love about Kerr, and the generation of women who were her most loyal readers, is that they seemed to be taking motherhood on a pass-fail basis. They weren't competing desperately for straight A's on the homefront—nor were they "surrendered" wives and mothers, submerging their identities into the giant gaping maw of family life. They were active and energetic but never "busier-than-thou," and they seemed to be having more fun than any grown-up woman I see around me today—myself included.

Sometimes I think about one Sunday morning, long ago, when my Aunt Marion—a truly great gal, but a sketchy cook at best—decided to get up early and make blueberry muffins, studded with fresh Michigan blueberries the kids had picked the day before. But when she pulled the golden muffins from the oven, she realized she'd forgotten to add the blueberries. In her place, Bombeck would have blamed the oversight on mental decay caused by encroaching menopause—at 31—and would have hidden the evidence by eating all the muffins herself. Pearson, like me, would have dumped the flawed muffins in the garbage and started over, fuming at her own incompetence. But my wise Aunt Marion took the Kerr approach: She just chuckled, poked holes in the hot muffins with her finger, and shoved those blueberries in.

More than anything else, I yearn for Kerr's blithe, unflappable self-confidence. Take for example, her no-nonsense approach to child safety: "The twins are four now, and for several years we have had galvanized iron fencing lashed onto the outside of their bedroom windows. This gives the front of the house a rather institutional look and contributes to unnecessary rumors about my mental health, but it does keep them off the roof, which is what we had in mind." If an occasional busybody tsked that the fenced windows betokened a mother too busy with her own career to keep an eye on her kids, Kerr didn't seem to hear, or care.

Tale Spin

Perhaps my love for Jean Kerr can be chalked up to misplaced nostalgia for an era I missed. It may no longer be possible for a woman to write without irony about the unalloyed joys of motherhood; our expanded choices have also expanded our collective sense of inadequacy, and set us up for internecine wars over whose personal vision of motherhood is most correct.

Yet while I understand that the era shapes its authors, I also believe that an author can shape an era. If we could find another Jean Kerr, maybe we could learn to drop our defensiveness, let slip our self-pity, and enjoy our lives, whatever our choices, a bit more than we do now.

My own life has been full of Jean Kerr moments. But one in particular stands out in my memory. It was a day when my second daughter was just three weeks old, and Olle, a Swedish publisher, came into town to discuss a major project. As a nursing mother, I didn't want to leave the baby for too long, so Olle agreed to meet at my house. Just as he appeared at the door, the babysitter, Juliana, dragged me into the bedroom. "You're leaking," she hissed. I looked down, and saw milk streaming down my front. While I frantically burrowed through my closet for another halfway business-like dress that might still fit, Benchley—a muscular Labrador retriever who fancied himself a shrewd judge of character—kept growling and baring his teeth every time Olle tried to move an inch from his chair. His growling upset the baby, who started to wail piteously.

Dickens, our Golden Retriever, was so overcome by the whole distressing milieu that he disgraced himself in a steaming pile on the dining room rug. Over the din, I heard a small, plaintive, Swedish voice: "Something hjorrible is hjappening ... "

As a writer, I could honestly spin that moment in any direction I please. I could use it to illustrate the unbearable stresses I bravely withstand as I try to combine motherhood with another career, or I could list it as further evidence that, in my life, nothing ever goes quite right. But on that day, I chose to see my world through Jean Kerr's eyes. And I laughed.

I'd give anything to find another author with a wise and knowing voice who could turn moments like these into art. ●

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America's Warlords

Up close with the U.S. military regional commanders who run the world.

BY JAMES FALLOWS

WHEN PEOPLE SPOKE OF AN American "empire" in the 1990s, they mainly used the term as a metaphor. The Soviet Union was gone; formerly communist economies from Vietnam to Romania were competing to attract U.S. investors; American music, movies, and computer programs were being pumped out around the world. Ambitious young people decided that they needed to learn English—even, *sacre bleu*, the ambitious young people of France. Old Europe's sense of being left behind by resurgent America gave the most serious spur to continental unification since World War II. And even though U.S. troops were chronically involved in regional wars and peacekeeping operations, the real foundation of American dominance seemed to be its "soft power"—the impact of its world-leading universities, its dominant pop culture, its revived high-tech industries, its booming employment rolls, its open-market ideology, and its continued ability to attract and use talent from around the world.

THE MISSION:
America's Military in the Twenty-First Century
by Dana Priest
Norton & Co., $26.95

One surprising implication of Dana Priest's *The Mission* is that even in the 1990s the foundations of empire were "harder" than they seemed. This is a loosely structured but fascinating and important book. While it draws few conclusions of its own, it provides vivid evidence about the contradictory effects of America's unmatched military power. On the one hand, there really is an empire, held together by expeditionary forces working in scores of countries around the world. On the other hand, there is also such a thing as imperial overstretch. Priest's accounts of the consequences of past military victories—in the Balkans, in Latin America, in the Middle East during the first Gulf War, and against the Soviet Union during the long Cold War—suggest the list of challenges the United States will face after a military victory in Iraq.

The organizing principle of the book—at least the one it starts out with—is the underappreciated idea that the real power in the military no longer lies with the chiefs of staff in the Pentagon. Instead it is wielded most dramatically by the regional commanders in chief (CinC) in the field. Priest—who has covered several wars and many years' worth of defense policy for *The Washington Post*—suggests at the beginning of the book that she will tell the story of the modern military through the story of these CinCs, pronounced "sinks."

The CinCs are in charge of all U.S. forces in a particular area. There are five regional CinCs, who divide up the world this way: The CinC in charge of the European command, who is also the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, handles Europe, all of Russia, most of Africa, plus Turkey and Israel. The Central Command covers the new republics of Central Asia, all of the Middle East except Israel, and a troubled swath of Africa from Kenya to Egypt. The Pacific Command runs from India eastward through Asia to Hawaii. The Southern Command covers 32 nations of Latin America. A fifth

JAMES FALLOWS, *a* Washington Monthly *contributing editor, is a national correspondent for* The Atlantic Monthly.

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region, the Northern Command, was created last year and covers the American "homeland" plus Mexico and Canada.

Priest calls these CinCs "proconsuls to the [American] empire," and she emphasizes how independent, influential, and important they have become. (The military has a variety of other "Commands" headed by CinCs, like the Special Operations Command, but Priest stresses that the regional CinCs are the ones with real power.) The rise of the CinCs began with the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols military reform act in 1986. The act was designed to correct the excesses of inter-service rivalry, and among other effects it gave regional CinCs sweeping authority over all the services operating in their geographic theater. The Commandant of the Marine Corps, in the Pentagon, has no influence over the Army or Air Force and is officially part of the Navy. But when Anthony Zinni, a Marine Corps general, was CinC for the Central Command, he could issue direct orders to the generals and admirals from all services in his region.

The secretary of state is the only American diplomat with his own plane. But each of the five regional military commanders has his own long distance aircraft, in-flight refuelers, and a fleet of helicopters.

The secretary of state is the only American diplomat with an airplane always at his disposal. (Lesser state department officials must fly commercial or ask for space-available on military transports.) By contrast, Priest says, "the Pentagon gives each regional CinC a long-distance aircraft and a fleet of helicopters for short flights. In-flight refuelers are available for very long trips. Some CinCs travel with an entourage of up to 35 officers and senior non-commissioned officers." A CinC lives in a "private palatial residence, guarded twenty-four hours a day by electronic shields and small armies of security guards." Apart from the individual power of a CinC, a strategic perspective based on regional commands subtly influences American policy, Priest says:

"Like the European colonialists who divided up Asia and Africa, the Defense Department draws and redraws the CinCdoms every two years ... Which command a country ends up in determines the prism through which the United States views its relations. When the states of Central Asia first won their independence from the Soviet Union ... [they] fell within U.S. European Command, where the focus was on getting them to look toward Europe and away from Mother Russia ... When the biannual review gave the Islamic states of South and Central Asia to Central Command, it signified a recognition by the president and the secretary of defense that Islamic fundamentalists and the terrorist cells they bred posed a new threat."

During the late Clinton and early Bush years, which occupy most of Priest's account, the regional commands were occupied by an unusually interesting group of people. Zinni, in the Central Command, was as outspoken and colorful as his successor, Tommy Franks, is deliberately bland and laconic. He rode camels and went on falcon hunts with Saudi royalty as part of his effort to understand Arab society. In Europe there was Wesley Clark, deeply involved in the NATO debates over how to handle the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo. Clark had preceded Bill Clinton by a few years as a Rhodes scholar from Arkansas; now, of course, he is a "mentioned" presidential candidate. The CinC for the Pacific was Dennis Blair, a sixth-generation Naval Academy graduate who was also in Bill Clinton's class of Rhodes scholars. In the Southern Command was Charles Wilhelm, a Marine veteran of Vietnam who became a coordinator of anti-drug and anti-drug-lord campaigns in Latin America.

After a few chapters, Priest seems to forget the plan of using the CinCs as narrative vehicles for her account of the modern military. The book sprawls in all directions and soon reveals its true structural blueprint: a newspaper reporter's accounts of the wars, negotiations, and foreign tours she has covered over the years. There are chapters on the recent fighting in Afghanistan, the human-rights abuses in East Timor, the struggle against corruption in Nigeria. Nearly a third of the book covers warfare and its aftermath in the Balkans and Kosovo, for which Priest was a correspondent. There are by-the-way comments, rather than anything like a developed argument, on questions of training, technology, and the match between budget and strength. For instance, this paragraph pops up on its own in the midst of a narrative:

"The Defense Department had spent $15 billion

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over two decades to make the Apaches the least vulnerable attack helicopters in the world. It spent another half billion dollars to send 6,200 troops and 26,000 tons of equipment to transform a muddy airport in Tirana, Albania, into an Apache launching pad. But instead, the vaunted helicopter came to symbolize everything wrong with the Army as it entered the twenty-first century: its inability to move quickly, its resistance to change, its obsession with [avoiding] casualties, its post-Cold War identity crisis."

What I'm saying will sound like a complaint, but in fact it's not. I finished the book admiring it greatly and feeling that its shaggy organization actually underscored the message it conveys. The real subject of Priest's book is how large and ungainly the American empire has grown, and how the military, with all its range and power, is challenged and sometimes overwhelmed by the effort to keep it in order.

Priest does a marvelous job of conveying both the daily operating realities and the large-scale strategic tensions that go with America's new role. The book is well-written and is full of sharp details and vignettes. For instance: that only two members of the Special Forces team that called in air strikes in Afghanistan had ever been on horses, before they got to the battlefield and realized that horses were the only way to get around. Or the reason for a gruesome "friendly fire" episode in Afghanistan, when a precision-guided bomb homed in precisely on an American unit: An Air Force controller changed the batteries on a GPS targeting unit but "did not realize that after the battery was changed, the machine would revert to displaying the coordinates for the GPS's location, instead of those for the intended target." Late in the book Priest has a wrenching chapter on an American soldier who raped and killed an 11-year-old girl in occupied Kosovo. Even in the age of precision weapons, real human beings, with their flaws, fight the battles and administer the peace.

To say that the theme of the book is "imperial overstretch" would be too simple; Priest says that many of America's new missions are necessary and effective. But she establishes beyond question that the effects of military engagements are vastly more complicated than they seem when going in. I had thought that David Fromkin's *A Peace to End All Peace* was the most valuable background book about warfare in Iraq. (It says that the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire, at the end of World War I, pre-ordained most of the problems of the modern Middle East.) *The Mission* is a worthy complement.

The Washington Monthly's Monthly Journalism Award

John Mangels, John Funk, and Stephen Koff

For an ongoing series on the Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station
***The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 2002**

Mangels, Funk, and Koff conducted a year-long investigation into the Davis-Besse nuclear reactor in Oak Harbor, Ohio, which last March was found to be severely corroded, almost to the point of rupturing. *The Plain Dealer*'s three-member team led the way in reporting on the failure of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to investigate the plant's parent company, First Energy Nuclear Operating Company, and exposed the corporate neglect and regulatory failure that is rife in the nuclear power industry. By examining thousands of documents and interviewing sources around the world, they uncovered the story of how First Energy took two years to declare to the NRC their knowledge of a serious corrosion problem on the massive steel lid covering Davis-Besse's radioactive core, which imperiled thousands of lives in the nearby community. *The Plain Dealer* series triggered widespread awareness and led to calls for investigations of both First Energy and the NRC.

The Monthly Journalism Award is presented each month to one or more newspaper, magazine, radio, or television stories (or series of stories) that demonstrate a commitment to the public interest. We are particularly interested in reporting that explains the successes and failures of government agencies at all levels and of other institutions such as the media, corporations, unions, and foundations that contribute to the existence or solution of public problems. Please send nominations (including a copy of the article or broadcast text) to The Washington Monthly Journalism Award, 733 15th Street, NW, Suite 520, Washington, DC 20005. Or e-mail us at editors@washingtonmonthly.com. Nominations for stories run in January 2003 are due March 5, 2003.

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Hayes's Ride

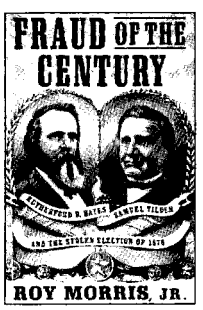
In 1876, a Democratic candidate won the presidency, but, through a lack of nerve lost the recount. Sound familiar?

BY JEFF GREENFIELD

THROUGHOUT THOSE REMARKABLE 37 days that followed Election Day, 2000, as the struggle for the presidency moved from the polling booths to the streets of Palm Beach to the courthouses of Florida and Washington, as we media types spoke of Constitutional crises and enough uncharted waters to re-launch Gilligan's *Minnow*, the voice of the American people seemed to be saying: "Um, excuse us, but could you figure out who the president is and let us know as soon as possible? Either one's more or less okay with us, but hey—Christmas is coming up, the NFL playoffs are around the corner, so could you wrap this up quick?"

In those days of peace and prosperity, America was, in the words of one observer, "a hotbed of rest." But what, I kept wondering, if we were in a different climate? What if the United States had been divided by an unpopular war, or by intense racial and cultural divisions? What if great numbers of Americans were prepared—literally—to take up arms if Gore or Bush had emerged the victor?

Is such a scenario unimaginable? The fact is, it happened—not in 2000, but in 1876, when New York Gov. Samuel Tilden, the Democratic nominee, went to bed on Election Night with a solid 250,000 plurality over Ohio Gov. Rutherford B. Hayes, only to see Hayes win the White House after a two-month battle where bribery, blackmail, extortion, voter fraud, and murder were freely employed by partisans of both candidates. It may seem like the stuff of fiction—in fact, Gore Vidal's novel *1876* puts the contest at the center of its plot—but the real story, set down by author and onetime political correspondent Roy Morris Jr., has enough drama, melodrama, farce, and tragedy to power a dozen such books. Morris's blend of research, narrative skill, and historical perspective renders *Fraud of the Century* a compelling tale for anyone even remotely interested in American political history.



FRAUD OF THE CENTURY: Rutherford B. Hayes, Samuel Tilden, and the Stolen Election of 1876
by Roy Morris Jr.
Simon & Schuster, $27.00

Morris begins with a brisk account of how the election came to be contested in the first place. While Hayes himself and most of his supporters believed that Tilden had won—the pro-Republican *Chicago Tribune* headline read: "Lost. The Country Given Over to Democratic Greed and Plunder"—a trio of Hayes supporters began to stoke the fires of resistance that night. (One of them was a *New York Times* editor named John C. Reid.) With telegrams sent to Republicans in key states, and with newspaper headlines proclaiming "A Doubtful Election," they enabled Republicans to argue that in three Southern states—South Carolina, Louisiana, and (historical precedent alert!) Florida, Hayes had in fact been the victor, which would have given him a one-vote electoral

JEFF GREENFIELD *is a CNN senior analyst. His books include* The People's Choice *and* Oh, Waiter! One Order of Crow! Inside the Strangest Presidential Election Finish in American History.

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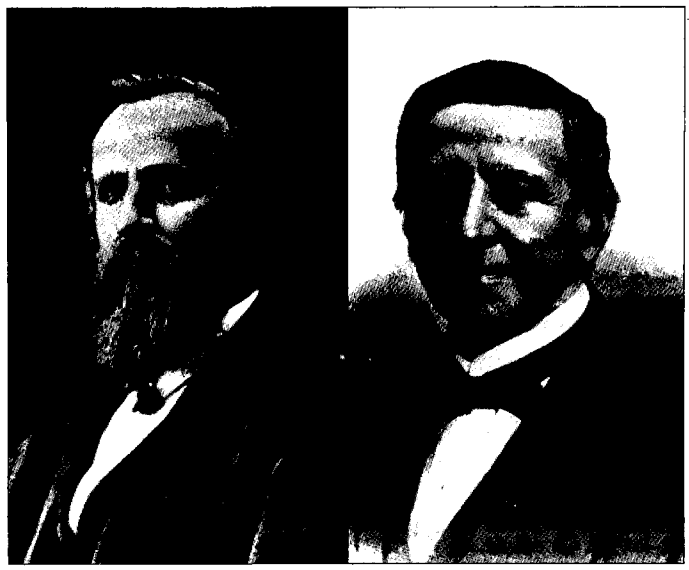
majority and thus the presidency.

Morris then steps back and provides the historical backdrop for the emerging post-election contest. In its centennial year, the United States was a nation still wounded by the Civil War that had ended barely a decade earlier. Republicans had held the White House for 16 years, in part by stoking resentment against the Democrats for being the party of rebellion. "Vote as you shot," the slogan went, and Republicans encouraged each other to "wave the bloody shirt." (This was no metaphor—in 1868, GOP Rep. Benjamin Butler took to the House floor to display the bloody shirt of an IRS tax collector who had been whipped by the Ku Klux Klan in Mississippi.) But the corruption that had flourished under the presidency of Ulysses S. Grant—corruption blatant enough to make an Enron executive blush with shame or envy—had given Democrats real hope that they could take the White House back.



Rutherford B. Hayes (left), the 19th U.S. president, and Samuel Tilden (right), a footnote to history, vied for the presidency in the disputed election of 1876.

Their candidate, Samuel Tilden, seemed the perfect choice. A civic leader, as well as a lawyer whose railroad work brought him enormous personal wealth, Tilden had taken on the notorious Tweed Ring that dominated New York City politics and had ridden that achievement into the New York governor's mansion in 1874. Two years later, under the battle cry "Tilden and Reform," he had become the consensus presidential choice of his party. (Well, not entirely: One Tweed loyalist, Honest John Kelly, repeatedly interrupted convention proceedings to denounce Tilden.) But, Morris notes, there was a weakness to Tilden that went beyond his physical frailty and congenital hypochondria. He was more cerebral than visceral, a man who believed in process and following the rules. In the post-election war that would be waged for the presidency, Tilden lacked the gifts of decisive command.

"His appeal was intellectual, not personal, and his tendency to aloof self-containment would cause him to be strangely passive at the most inopportune time—when the presidency itself was hanging in the balance," Morris writes. (Al Gore historical allusion, anyone?)

By contrast, Rutherford B. Hayes was a man with an instinct for battle; an instinct revealed by a remarkable record of Civil War heroism—he was wounded four times during the war, and repeatedly escaped death by the narrowest of margins. He went from the battlefield to Congress to the Ohio governor's mansion, and won the presidential nomination because the front-runner, Maine's James G. Blaine, was too burdened by charges of corruption to be an effective candidate. (One of the many diverting accounts in the book is the story of Blaine taking to the floor of the House to read highly distorted excerpts from letters that in fact proved his corruption—thus anticipating President Nixon's bowdlerized tape excerpts by nearly a century.)

Morris's account of the election itself takes up much of the book, but it is a story critical to understanding what happened after the votes were cast. In several Southern states, the clashes went far beyond peaceful politics. Black Republicans, who held power thanks to Reconstruction laws and the presence of federal troops, fought sometimes murderous battles with whites. Charges of intimidation and violence were exchanged across lines of race and party. These charges set the stage for what would happen after the election, when Republican-controlled election boards in Florida, South Carolina, and Louisiana essentially took the most serious GOP charges at face value and threw out enough Democratic votes to swing the states to Hayes—some 13,000 of them in Louisiana, where the officials in charge of the vote count had themselves committed enough crimes to fill a season's worth of "America's Most Wanted."

The scene then shifted to Washington, and a divided Congress—the House was held by Democ-

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rats, the Senate by Republicans. Tilden's hope was that the votes of the three Southern states would simply be set aside, throwing the election into the House. Instead—to his dismay—Congress slapped together a 15-man Electoral Commission, with five House members, five Senate members, and five Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court—two Democrats, two Republicans, and one independent. But, in a last-minute twist no screenwriter would dare concoct, David Davis, the independent justice, was elected senator from Illinois, and promptly resigned—to be replaced by a loyal Republican justice who cast every vote along party lines. The Electoral Commission gave every contested electoral vote to Hayes. Tilden, who had resisted his followers' urgings to dispatch supporters to Washington, or to contest the process in the streets—"Tilden or Blood!" went the cry—chose not to plunge the country into chaos.

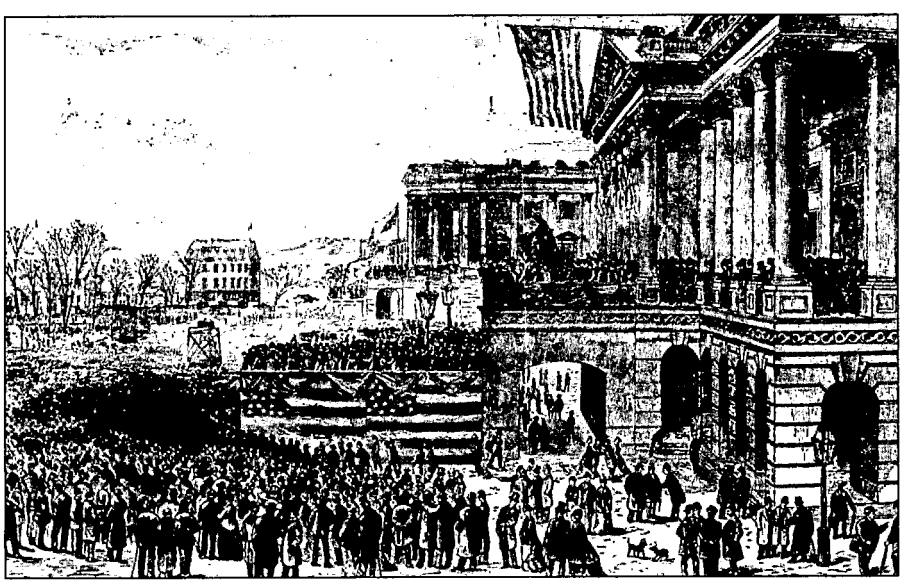
In the post-election war waged for the presidency in 1876, Samuel Tilden, a more cerebral than visceral man who believed in process and following the rules, lacked the decisive command to win. Al Gore allusion, anyone?

"We have just emerged from one Civil War," he said. "It will never do to engage in another; it would end in the destruction of free government."

In fact, the cost of Hayes's victory was dear. While Morris notes that the country had wearied of Reconstruction before the election, Hayes's triumph—due in some part to the willingness of Southern Democrats to accept it in return for a lighter federal hand—led "to the infamous Jim Crow laws that officially sanctioned the social and political disenfranchisement of millions of Southern blacks." Whether a reform-minded Tilden, taking office without the cloud of fraud that hung over Hayes, could or would have changed this bleak history is one of those tantalizing "what-ifs." As for Hayes—dubbed "His Fraudulency" by his opponents—he had already pledged not to seek a second term before the votes were counted, although his administration was successful enough that one Democratic partisan quipped, "he has done so well that I sometimes almost wish he had been elected."

The one story Morris does not tell is what Congress tried to do to ensure that there would never be another "stolen election." In 1887, it passed the "Electoral Tally Act," which tried to push the final authority over the votes back to the states. Had the Supreme Court in 2000 not stopped the Florida recount, we might well have been treated to a textbook case of The Law of Unintended Consequences—with the Florida legislature asserting its power to award the electoral votes to Bush, a state Supreme Court ordering the votes awarded to Gore, and two competing slates of electors heading toward an evenly divided Congress as the Inaugural date drew ever closer.

Should we ever be faced with that political drama, I hope there is a historian as gifted and perceptive as Roy Morris to chronicle it. ●



Inauguration of Rutherford B. Hayes, 1877 engraving by Theodore R. Davis

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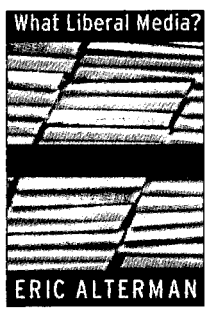
Political Booknotes

Bias Schmias

By Timothy Noah

THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK under review has stated in his MSNBC weblog that he dislikes me personally. Some might conclude that I should pass up this assignment, but the dislike is not mutual. I like Eric Alterman, read his weblog faithfully (and also his press columns in *The Nation*), and am only mildly troubled by the fact that he has hurled various insults at me in print. These things happen, especially when you write daily for the Internet.

I also like, though have a few disagreements with, Alterman's book. *What Liberal Media?* makes a smart and important point: The widespread assumption that the news media is captive to liberalism simply isn't true. Alterman makes his strongest case when discussing the "punditocracy," a term he coined in his 1992 book, *Sound and Fury*. The dominance of conservatives on TV shout-shows like "The McLaughlin Group" is undeniable. Alterman overstates it slightly by claiming that until MSNBC hired Phil Donahue, "not a single liberal [had] been recruited by a cable network to host a solo talk show." (In fact, during the 1990s CNN had "Both Sides With Jesse Jackson" and "Heads Up With Michael Kinsley.") But Alterman's larger point is well taken: There is a bizarre dearth of liberals on TV news shows, and many of those who get pegged as liberals—Morton Kondracke comes to mind—are really moderate conservatives. In print, left-of-center commentators are more plentiful, but not nearly so thick on the ground as conservatives. Moreover, Alterman notes, nonideological pundits like David Broder often maintain an overt sympathy for the Washington establishment, which is itself somewhat conservative. About Clinton, Broder famously complained to *The Washington Post*'s Sally Quinn, "He came in here, and he trashed the place, and it's not his place." The posture of mandarin disdain seemed to suggest Broder thought Washington was *his* place.



WHAT LIBERAL MEDIA?
The Truth About Bias and the News
by Eric Alterman
Basic Books, $25.00

Washington think tanks, where "inside the Beltway" wisdom is often manufactured, have a liberal reputation that probably dates back to Richard Nixon's declaration that he wanted to firebomb the Brookings Institution. Brookings remains the most-cited think tank in Washington, but these days it's a stretch to call it "liberal." In reality, it's a bastion of centrist technocrats, many of whom are Republicans. (Indeed, as Alterman points out, until recently Brookings was run by Michael Armacost, a Republican who served in the State Department under Ronald Reagan and as ambassador to Japan under George H.W. Bush.) The other most-cited think tanks tend to be conservative ones like the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute. Indeed, Alterman points out, you have to work your way down to the 11th and 12th most-cited think tanks (the Urban Institute and the Economic Policy Institute) to find someplace "where mainstream Republicans and conservatives would honestly feel out of place." The dominance of conservatism among these think tanks is no mystery: They're funded largely by corporations that want lower taxes and fewer regulations.

Alterman's thesis rests on shakier ground when he examines social bias. To his credit, he concedes that "the overall flavor of the elite media reporting favors gun control, campaign finance reform, gay rights, and the environmental movement," though he doesn't find the bias "as overwhelming as some conservative critics do." Alterman also comes close to admitting that the media are hypersensitive about race, and points out that more often than not they choose not to cover racial issues at all, leaving (according to one survey) somewhere between 40 to 60 percent of all whites in America with the misapprehension that the average black American fares as well as the average white American in employment, income, education, and access to health care. In a chapter titled "What Economic Bias?" Alterman points out that business reporters tend to lean conservative, but fails to observe that most journalists who write about the economy from a more broadly societal view tend to lean liberal. As I write this, I can't think of a single economics-beat reporter (as opposed to commentator) who actually believes the recently proposed Bush tax cuts represent sound economic thinking.

Outside the pundit class, it remains true that reporters and editors remain predominantly liberal. Alterman addresses this reality with varying degrees of effectiveness. He's entirely unpersuasive when he explains away the fact that nearly 90 percent of all Washington journalists voted for Clinton by arguing that Clinton wasn't very liberal. True enough, but he was certainly the more liberal choice. Alterman also maintains that reporters' obvious adoration of John McCain, an Arizona Republican, contradicts the "liberal media" stereotype. But much of McCain's appeal derived from the fact that he was drifting (and continues to drift) leftward. Alterman is more effective when he shows how affluence has made the more elite sectors of the media more economically conservative. Indeed, I was astonished to turn on CNN the other day and catch Jeff Greenfield, a onetime aide to Robert Kennedy, pooh-poohing the idea that people who make $100,000 a year are rich.

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(Reality check: 86 percent of U.S. households earn less than $100,000.)

Alterman's most compelling argument about reporters and editors is not that they're conservative, but that their product is. Because the public thinks the media are overwhelmingly liberal, and because conservatives have grown very adept at browbeating the media about this, reporters and editors tend to overcompensate. That goes a long way toward explaining why, during the 2000 election and the "long count" that followed, Bush got more favorable coverage from political reporters than Gore did, even though an informal poll taken by documentary filmmaker Alexandra Pelosi showed that the majority of reporters traveling on the Bush plane actually ended up voting for Gore. I would bet that the majority of reporters traveling on the Gore plane voted for Gore, too—even though they portrayed him, inaccurately, as a habitual liar. (Incidentally, Alterman cites me as a liberal journalist who's been cowed by the right, because I've questioned the credibility of conservative-turned-liberal-darling David Brock.)

Thirty years ago, when Richard Nixon ranted about the liberal media that were out to get him, he wasn't completely paranoid. The news media were pretty uniformly liberal in those days. But things have changed a lot since then. The old news organizations are more reflexively conservative, and newer news outlets—Fox News, talk radio, etc.—are consciously conservative. Do liberal bastions remain? A few. *The New York Times* and National Public Radio are still identifiably liberal, though Alterman won't acknowledge it, possibly because Alterman's own political outlook is a little to their left. His book's most irritating omission is its failure to discuss these two news outlets at length. Still, Alterman's larger message is dead-on, and ought to be heard. *What Liberal Media?* gets many little things wrong, but it gets the big things right.

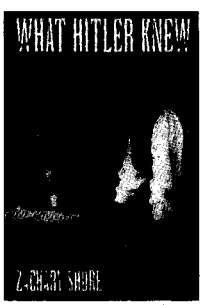
TIMOTHY NOAH, *a contributing editor of* The Washington Monthly, *writes* Slate's *"Chatterbox" column.*

Hitler's Handlers

By Joe Dempsey

JUST WHAT ARE SADDAM HUSSEIN and Kim Jong-Il up to? Zachary Shore's new book, *What Hitler Knew*, reminds those seeking an answer that even dictators don't enjoy complete control over their governments. They may not be impeded by a constitutional system of checks and balances, as American presidents are, but they can certainly be hampered by a limitation all too familiar to *Washington Monthly* readers: the behavior of the bureaucrats they oversee.

Shore's intriguing book examines the archived papers of several important Nazi-era diplomats and foreign policy officials in an effort to piece together how well informed Hitler was—or wasn't—about Germany's foreign adversaries in the period leading up to World War II and how, in at least one case, that may have accelerated the oncoming war. In a sense, this project is something like a historical GAO report, tracing the flow of information up the chain of command in an effort to pinpoint where it broke down.



WHAT HITLER KNEW: The Battle for Information in Nazi Foreign Policy
by Zachary Shore
Oxford University Press, $29.95

Shore, who has served as a member of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff and brings an insider's expertise to his subject, begins his investigation shortly after Hitler took office in 1933. Despite the dramatic change of leadership, Germany's foreign ministry bureaucracy experienced no wholesale house cleaning. Instead, Hitler inherited a ministry teeming with socially elite Weimar-era career officials like Foreign Minister Constantin Freiherr von Neurath, who were versed in the "rigid lines of hierarchical command" through which the ministry operated.

All of that changed when Hitler came to power. German citizens, including those in the government, were frightened by his infamous purges, such as the Night of the Long Knives, in which at least 77 people were killed (including a former chancellor) and more than 1,100 arrested. Hitler's SS also "struck to eliminate rivals, to settle old scores, and, above all, to leave their mark." By creating a climate of distrust, uncertainty, and fear, his regime inadvertently denied itself the benefit of receiving important foreign policy information. Instead of performing their jobs, the first priority for career officers quickly became protecting their own livelihoods (and lives).

As a result, many foreign ministry officials like Neurath began hoarding information as a means of self-protection. By reading—and then burying—intelligence reports and other important documents, officials could appear knowledgeable and useful, thus preserving their own hide. When Hitler contemplated retaking the Rhineland, for instance, Neurath boldly contradicted the Führer's other advisers and urged him to move ahead, secure in the knowledge (through reports he'd gathered but not shared) that France wasn't prepared to protect the area. Through this measure, Shore writes, Neurath could "appear as a bold risk-taker, a quality Hitler strongly favored in his advisers." Sure enough, when the invasion succeeded with ease, Neurath's star rose.

It was, however, a fleeting victory. Neurath was locked in a fierce rivalry with a Nazi Party foreign policy official named Joachim von Ribbentrop, who had his own bureaucratic tricks for advancement. Ribbentrop delivered sensitive cables to Hitler directly, before the ministry had a chance to digest them. In the fall of 1935, he proposed reshuffling the foreign policy organizations in a way that would have severely weakened Neurath (his plan failed only when Neurath threatened to resign). When Neurath retaliated by

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posting Ribbentrop to London in a bid to isolate him, the Nazi official stubbornly avoided the London embassy for months on end and continued reporting directly to Hitler. As his access to the Führer waned, so did Neurath's influence. And as Nazi Party officials like Ribbentrop gradually came to dominate the positions of power in the foreign ministry, career foreign policy bureaucrats—who held the actual expertise—were edged out. By the time Neurath learned that Ribbentrop had brought Japan into the Anti-Comintern Pact, Hitler had already approved of the move.

Shore suggests that the bureaucratic infighting and personal interest that prompted Hitler's advisers to conceal information may have had pronounced effects on Germany's foreign policy leading up to World War II. In 1939, for example, the chief political official in the foreign ministry, Ernst von Weizsacker, knew of an overture Stalin made at least four days before Hitler did—but may have withheld this information in the hope that Stalin would ally with Great Britain, rather than Germany. Later that year, Ribbentrop may have done precisely the opposite, withholding reports that suggested the British were open to negotiation. Why? A pact with England could have jeopardized the Nazi-Soviet alliance—"the crowning moment of his career."

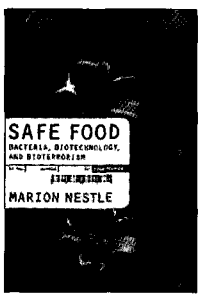
Had Hitler been aware of Stalin's offer, it might have hastened a crucial alliance. Had he known about Great Britain's willingness to negotiate, he might have done so, even as World War II drew near. Much of Shore's brief, but well-researched, examination is speculative. It's difficult to know for certain who knew what when. What is clear is that Hitler's failure to master his own bureaucracy played an important role in the course of events that led to World War II.

JOE DEMPSEY *is a writer living in Washington, D.C.*

Food Fight

By Chris Mooney

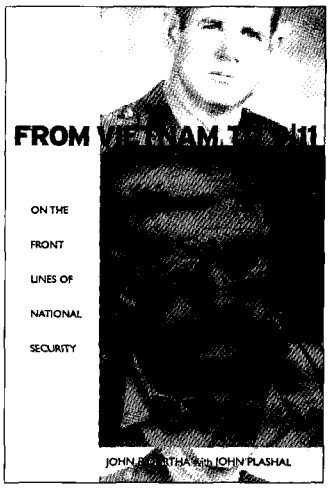
IN THE ILLUSTRIOUS HISTORY OF the American meat industry, few moments stand out quite like the day in 1999 when Rosemary Mucklow, director of the National Meat Association, suggested that tighter E. coli regulations were really a Clinton administration plot to make Americans forget about impeachment. This and other highlights of the food industry's hostility to safety regulation can be found in Marion Nestle's *Safe Food: Bacteria, Biotechnology, and Bioterrorism*, a book which, like Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation*, makes you think before you eat.



SAFE FOOD:
Bacteria, Biotechnology, and Bioterrorism
by Marion Nestle
University of California Press, $27.50

Nestle is chair of Nutrition and Food Studies at New York University's Steinhardt School of Education and a leading food safety expert who has sat on numerous government panels devoted to the subject. The first part of her book is chiefly concerned with the not always successful federal efforts to keep deadly bacteria out of the nation's food supply. The historic 1906 Meat Inspection Act, for example, required food inspectors to "poke and sniff" animals and carcasses to make sure they weren't infected—not a very good way to detect invisible pathogens. And though a scientific method of detecting foodborne bacteria arose out of NASA's 1959 attempt to provide astronauts safe food in outer space, thanks to industry lobbying, it took until 1994 for the government to extend these protections to the planet earth. "Food safety," Nestle concludes, "is as much a matter of politics as it is of science."

It's not exactly the most provocative thesis, but it's basically true. In most respects, the campaign to bring safety to food production is a classic Washington tale, with big corporations energetically lobbying Con-



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gress, generating pseudo-science, gaming the regulatory process, and subverting the public good to preserve profits. Not unreasonably, Nestle argues that what the United States needs is a centralized, European-style food safety agency to replace the current dysfunctional regulatory structure (which gives the Food and Drug Administration jurisdiction over cheese pizza and charges the Department of Agriculture with pizza that has meat toppings).

The book veers off course, though, when it turns to the subject of biotechnology. (Bioterrorism, the third focus of the book, gets short shrift.) In particular, Nestle worries about the almost complete lack of regulation of genetically modified (GM) foods, a problem she treats as parallel to feces-smeared steer carcasses and salmonella-ridden ground chuck. There's certainly some similarity between efforts to regulate foodborne pathogens and genetically modified foods, respectively: Neither industry wants it. Just as the National Meat Association tried to block new federally mandated procedures for keeping pathogenic microbes out of meat, the biotechnology industry strenuously resists calls for the FDA to require labeling of foods containing genetically modified ingredients. Yet as Nestle herself admits up front, foodborne pathogens are a proven threat, and GM foods are not. Bacteria like E. coli, salmonella, and listeria kill some 5,000 people each year in the United States. (Full disclosure: Salmonella from a McDonald's chicken sandwich nearly killed me when I was 17 years old, and forced me to miss high school graduation.) By comparison, in Nestle's own words, "Eating food containing transgenic ingredients appears unlikely to cause direct harm to human health."

Nestle tries to justify yoking the two issues by claiming that the debate over GM foods, like that over foodborne pathogens, is at the root of a debate over food safety. But since there's no solid evidence that GM foods are dangerous, Nestle is left to argue that anti-GM groups like Greenpeace have raised safety questions "as a surrogate" because they have been cut off from discussing more sweeping concerns about the technological manipulation of nature, corporate corruption, economic inequality, and so forth. For example, during the spat over the escape of StarLink corn into the human food supply several years ago, Nestle contends that the question of whether the corn caused allergic reactions in those who consumed it—all evidence suggests it did not—was a side issue. Rather, "the real issues had to do with the company's control over the food supply and evasion of democratic processes of government oversight." It's hard to see the connection to the question of food safety except in the loosest sense.

What's puzzling is that Nestle is no anti-GM radical. She more or less admits that GM foods aren't dangerous according to any scientific standard of risk assessment, and on several occasions in her book lavishly praises food advocates who have staked out a very different stance from her own on biotechnology. In particular, she highlights the work of Carol Tucker Foreman, who founded the Safe Food Coalition and lobbied forcefully for science-based pathogen standards, yet also headed a D.C.-based consulting firm employed by the agricultural biotech firm Monsanto—"Monsatan" to the anti-GM activists. Consider, also, the Center for Science in the Public Interest, a leading consumer group that pops up in Nestle's account of the battle to reduce foodborne pathogens. The organization's head, Michael Jacobson, has gone on record opposing anti-GM activism, writing in *The Wall Street Journal* that "too many biotech critics have resorted to alarming the public about purported environmental and food risks."

The truth is, Nestle is far too kind in her description of advocacy groups' use of food safety as a "surrogate" for other concerns about biotechnology. It's one thing to label genetically modified food so that consumers can choose whether they really want to eat it or not, as Nestle advocates. It's another to burn down fields of transgenic crops, as groups like Greenpeace have done. That's not to say that the folks at Monsanto are saints. They have oversold the benefits of their products while belittling the public's understandable worries about genetic engineering. But what makes the food biotechnology debate so intriguing is that, unlike the issue of foodborne pathogens in meat, it's hardly a black and white story of a greedy industry threatening public safety. Nestle's distrust of the biotech industry blinds her to the fact that anti-GM activists, too, are a well-organized special interest whose objectives don't always overlap with everyone else's. Recently, in the face of disastrous food shortages, Zambia has balked at accepting U.S. food aid because of fears of GM foods—fears inspired by European activist groups like Greenpeace. Yes, that's right: Food safety is political.

CHRIS MOONEY *is a contributing writer to* The American Prospect.

Minority Report

By Jay Mathews

THERE ARE IN THIS WORLD A few blessed spots where the very best yearn to perform. For baseball players, it is Yankee Stadium; for lawyers, the courtroom of the U.S. Supreme Court; for astronomers, the Keck Observatory at Mauna Kea. And for educational researchers, particularly those interested in higher education, it is the College and Beyond Survey, a colossal database of 75,000 students who enrolled in 34 colleges in 1951, 1976, and 1989. Such a rich statistical layer cake makes economists' and sociologists' mouths water and has been the source of many studies on the impact of college on American lives.

The Mellon Foundation, which supplied the money for College and Beyond, has now served up a new treat: the National Longitudinal Survey of Freshmen (NLSF), funded jointly by Mellon and the Atlantic Philanthropies to the tune of $3.5 million. *The Source of the River*, written by a team of scholars from the

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University of Pennsylvania, draws on the survey's list of 959 Asians, 998 whites, 1,051 African Americans, and 916 Latinos who in the fall of 1999 enrolled at 28 selective colleges and universities, from Howard to Northwestern, Georgetown to Swarthmore.

And it appears just in time. As the University of Michigan affirmative action lawsuit comes before the Supreme Court, college admissions policy is once again one of the great flashpoints in American life. As the nation plunges into another soul-and-statistic-searching debate about whether and under what conditions affirmative action on campus can be justified, all sides in the dispute will be turning to data troves like the NLSF to build their arguments. This is scholarship of the first order, a study that will influence thinking about our society for the next generation. General readers of this book may be irked to discover that it contains only the first tentative results from what is likely to be a rich vein of information yielding several volumes. But specialists will love it. And those of us who like to sound smart in luncheon conversations will discover many intriguing statistical gems.

THE SOURCE OF THE RIVER: The Social Origins of Freshmen at America's Colleges and Universities
by Douglas S. Massey, Camille Z. Charles, Garvey F. Lundy, and Mary J. Fischer
Princeton University Press, $29.95

In future debates over how much of a preference to give minority college applicants, the NLSF will be able to shed light on a number of murky questions: Do black students ill prepared in ghetto schools learn more from the hard courses of selective colleges or is it better to let them go to colleges that don't usually demand high SAT scores? Do minorities drop out of such colleges in higher proportions because they can't handle the academics or because they don't feel comfortable in the social scene? Do college programs that define students by their race improve their achievement, or is it better to treat them just like any other undergraduate?

This book is only a start in that long inquiry, but it shows the reader all the equipment it is taking along. The book's appendix gives all 155 questions asked to the undergraduates, from the name and relationship of everyone in their household at age six (question 1), to their ratings of various ethnicities on an intelligence scale (question 77), to a request for a look at their college applications (question 155). Among a wealth of charts is one that points out that a higher percentage of Latinos and blacks than whites have swimming pools at their high schools, and another that shows that the same portion (28.5 percent) of blacks and Asians report that their best friends read a lot.

The authors also provide some intriguing hints as to where they are going with this, even though we must wait until later this year for anyone in this cohort to get through college, and much later to find out what their degrees do for them. The authors' idea is to test the various explanations for the achievement gap in college between whites and Asians on one side and blacks and Latinos on the other. In this volume, they draw some interesting conclusions from their analysis of the attitudinal differences between the ethnic groups and their experiences in their first year of college.

Some favorite explanations for minority underachievement, like the bias against "acting white," get a beating, and others, like the notion of "stereotype threat," are endorsed. "We found no support whatsoever for the view that blacks and Latinos performed poorly because they felt that working hard and earning good grades would be a betrayal of their group identity," the authors say. "We did find substantial support, however, for Claude Steele's hypothesis of stereotype vulnerability—the disengagement from school work that stems from fears of living up to neg-

"Nestle has emerged as one of the sanest, most know-ledgeable, and independent voices in the current debate over the health and safety of the American food system. All of us who eat should count ourselves lucky to have this indispensable book."
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ative stereotypes of minority intellectual inferiority."

The authors kept a close eye on those minority students—about 9 percent of the blacks and 7 percent of the Latinos—who had doubts about their own abilities and were self-conscious about the views of teachers, or who doubted their own ethnic group's abilities. In their first term of college, those students "earned significantly lower grades and failed courses at much higher rates than other minority students," the authors say.

This is like reading Harry Potter. You have to start with the first book to appreciate the wonders of the next few. So plunk down your $29.95 and get ready for an interesting trip.

JAY MATHEWS *is a* Washington Post *education reporter and columnist.*

"Oreo" Nation

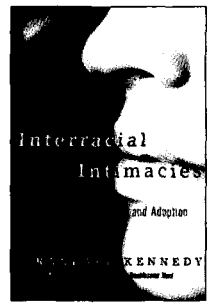
By David J. Garrow

THREE DECADES AGO, DURING my final undergraduate semester, I ventured south to visit the graduate school I'd decided to attend. Upon returning north, I told my best friend that during the trip I'd met a young woman whom I'd slept with. My friend was eager to learn more, but when I mentioned that the woman was black, he reacted with unabashed horror and salacious curiosity.

This long-forgotten memory came to mind while reading *Interracial Intimacies*, a rich and outspoken new volume by Randall Kennedy, an African-American law professor at Harvard. More precisely, it recurred during Kennedy's discussion of "racist folklore that equated amalgamation with something akin to bestiality" and his assertion that, even a quarter-century after my experience, there remains an "active belief, still widespread, that interracial sexual affection is shameful."

Kennedy's long book is thoughtful and wide-ranging, spanning everything from the slavery era to present-day battles over interracial adoption. His early chapters synthesize a burgeoning historical literature on pre-20th century American interracial intimacy. Most readers will readily accept Kennedy's observation that "it would be difficult to construct a context more conducive to sexual exploitation than American racial slavery." But some may be surprised to learn that after the Civil War, lawmakers' efforts to prevent interracial unions actually increased: Anti-miscegenation statutes criminalizing interracial marriage were widespread across the entire United States by the beginning of the 20th century. Only in 1967, 13 years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, did the U. S. Supreme Court finally declare such laws unconstitutional in the case of *Loving v. Virginia.*

While much of Kennedy's book is historical, his legal realism—his belief that individual feelings often trump written rules—informs his political worldview. History, he explains, generally shows that "the transformation of public opinion is even more important than the transformation of legal formalities" for achieving social change.



INTERRACIAL INTIMACIES: Sex, Marriage, Identity, and Adoption
by Randall Kennedy
Pantheon Books, $30.00

He applies this perspective most explicitly to his long discussion of current interracial adoption policies. Today, as in the past, a disproportionately large number of parentless children are black. Notwithstanding the South's heritage of expressly prohibiting interracial adoption, by the late 1960s, the number of such adoptions nationally had begun to rise. By 1971 more than 2,500 black children annually were being adopted into white homes.

But the following year the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) declared that black children should be placed only in black homes. As a result, within two years, interracial adoptions declined by more than two-thirds. The group's advocacy of race matching in adoption, Kennedy notes, "eerily echoed the rhetoric of white segregationists." Yet even as recently as 1985, the NABSW reiterated that "the placement of black children in white homes is a blatant form of race and cultural genocide." Their belief, Kennedy explains, is that "interracial adoption will create a host of 'Oreos,'" much as those who oppose cross-racial adoption of Native American and Asian children fear the production of "apples" and "bananas."

Kennedy's opposition toward these racialist attitudes is intense. "Race matching," he writes, "is in essence just another form of racial profiling," applied in this instance to prospective parents rather than travelers, and Kennedy believes that its proponents should be forced "to defend the racial discrimination they embrace." He further suspects that strong race-matching tendencies persist among social workers, even where statutes or policies expressly forbid it, and that such deception by officials is widespread "even while under oath in court proceedings."

Kennedy's antipathy toward using race as a factor in interracial adoption leads him toward explicit opposition to affirmative action. He is laudably frank in acknowledging this and admits his ambivalence about continuing such programs. "They have performed a great service," he writes, but their use of race is "a toxic activity" that should be avoided if at all possible. But Kennedy is unequivocal about what he values most: "if dismantling affirmative action must be a part of the price of effectively doing away with race matching, ... I, for one, am willing to pay."

Quite admirably, Kennedy recognizes that his hostility toward race matching is analytically inseparable from opposition to racial preference programs. In fact, what he says of proponents of race matching may likewise apply to the many people in American higher education who obfuscate and dissemble when con-

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fronted with probing questions about the specific details of preferential admissions policies. "Sincere proponents of bad ideas are often the worst kind of fanatics," Kennedy explains. "True believers" will fight for what they know is right "even if it entails engaging in deception."

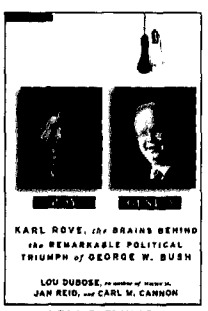
Kennedy concludes that "we should distrust all who would draw racial lines, even (or perhaps especially) when they insist that they are doing so for good reasons." His own yearning for "a society in which race has become obsolete as a significant social marker" may strike committed racialists as naive, but Kennedy rightly sees himself as championing Frederick Douglass's amalgamationist dream that someday all Americans will be "blended into a common nationality." *Interracial Intimacies* is an important, challenging, and thought provoking step toward that goal.

DAVID J. GARROW *is the author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning* Bearing the Cross, *a biography of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Rove Rage

By Jamie Malanowski

IF KARL ROVE WERE A STOCK, this might be a good time to short him. It's not that I think he's about to go on a losing streak. Hardly—he may have a great many victories in him yet. But when people are calling you "Boy Genius" and they're not being sarcastic—people, for example, like Lou Dubose, Jan Reid, and Carl M. Cannon in their new book *Boy Genius: Karl Rove, the Brains Behind the Remarkable Political Triumph of George W. Bush*—you have to think that this may be just about as good as it gets.



BOY GENIUS:
Karl Rove, the Brains Behind the Remarkable Political Triumph of George W. Bush
by Lou Dubose, Jan Reid, Carl M. Cannon
Public Affairs, $15.99

First, there's the genius business. The authors make the case that Rove is a highly talented operative who pretty much does nothing but win. They present him single-minded and highly prepared, with a shrewd eye for political talent, and an admirably ruthless willingness to go for the jugular. They give us a good long look at his career, taking us on a fan's tour of a quarter-century of Texas state politics. Believe me, to love this book, you're going to have to be the kind of person who gets the vapors from reading sentences like, "With Rove handling his direct mail, Clements was in even better shape for his 1982 reelection bid against Mark White, the tall, drawling centrist attorney general who had replaced John Hill." It's the kind of book that will have the same effect on Charlie Cook that Grateful Dead concerts have on Bill Walton.

But what's interesting about all these campaigns is to see just how seldom Rove-run operations make mistakes. It's always the other fellows who don't read the land right, or who make the faux pas, or who have some skeleton in their closets, or who don't realize they've lashed themselves to some position that's going to anchor them in the political deep. Look no further than the 2000 election: It was Gore, with all his assets, who couldn't get out of his own way. Bush simply kept putting his best foot forward, and in the end, that was enough to put him in the position where the Supreme Court could elect him president. Not fumbling and not committing penalties may not be enough to get a football coach declared a genius, but it will win him a lot of games.

What does get someone like Rove declared a genius is pulling off the upset. The managers of Dwight Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy weren't thought of geniuses. Rove is acclaimed a genius by these writers and others because Bush was such a decided underdog—a man whose political gifts were then, and to a surprising degree remain, "misunderestimated." Rove also gets recognized for the astonishing Republican rout in the 2002 midterms. The reason

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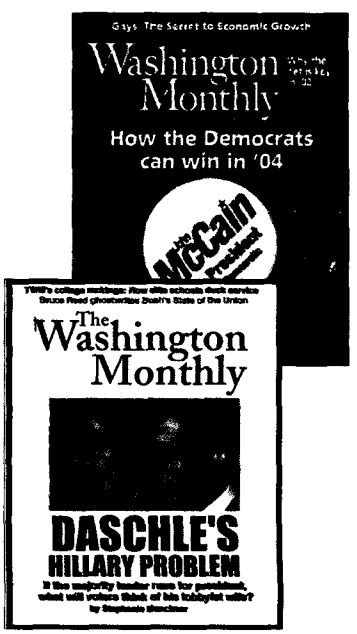

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why you'd want to short your Rove genius stock is not that one can diminish his accomplishments by pointing out all the ways his adversaries over the years have blown it. It's true, but irrelevant (even though it's clear that the difference between political genius and MSNBC talking head lies in convincing a lot of older Jewish voters in Florida to mark their butterfly ballots for Pat Buchanan).

No, the reason that Rove's genius quotient is apt to drop is that it's unlikely that he will ever be able to surprise people again. It's hard to imagine that the 2004 election will turn on issues other than the war on terrorism and the economy. Through the 2002 elections, the country effectively left it up to Bush and the Republicans to solve these issues. Bush either will have made progress on these things, or he will not. If he has gotten results, it may be easy for him to win reelection, but it will be because Bush has been a capable president, not because Rove is a genius. And if Bush has not made progress—if his tax cuts don't work, and if his war has turned into a messy conflict, or, almost as bad, a messy post-conflict, and if there are more terrorist attacks—then it will also be hard for Rove to make Bush look like a winner. But at least he will have the opportunity.

The second reason that Rove will have trouble burnishing his genius rep is that he works for a Bush, a family that is famously loyal to its retainers, but not famously generous sharing the spotlight with them. A Bush presidency does not feature Robin Hood and his Merry Men, but rather Robin Hood and his Largely Anonymous Team Players. There's a reason why the Bush administration has placed Homeland Security in the hands of the efficient, bland Tom Ridge, and not the face of 9/11, the hero-diva Rudy Giuliani. The book relates the chilling and amusing story about what happened after *National Journal* published a lengthy cover story on Rove in April 2002. At the White House Correspondents' Association dinner a week later, Bush pointedly told one of the writers that he didn't like his aides getting star treatment. At the same dinner, Vice President Cheney called the piece "grossly excessive," which sounds like one of those brief, ominous, underplayed lines you half think you heard spoken by Arnold Schwarzenegger in *The Terminator*. The book also reports that along with "Boy Genius," the president has given Rove another nickname: "Turd Blossom," a term common in Texas for a flower that grows out of cowpies. I'm sure all of Bush's nicknames convey affection and respect, but given the alternatives, I think I'd prefer my boss to call me Karl.

The third reason Rove will have trouble holding onto the genius label is that there's no obvious sequel for him. Chairman of the Republican Party? Campaign consultant? Talking head? Head of the George W. Bush Presidential Library? They're all steps down. He could run for office, but the skills don't transfer well, as Kenny O'Donnell, Pierre Salinger, and Hamilton Jordan have demonstrated. No, there's only one test worthy of his time and talent. Condi vs. Hillary in 2008. Rove in Rice's corner, Carville in Clinton's. Genius takes all.

JAMIE MALANOWSKI *is a New York writer.*

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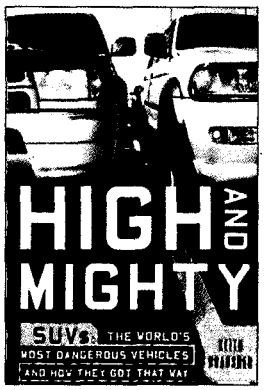

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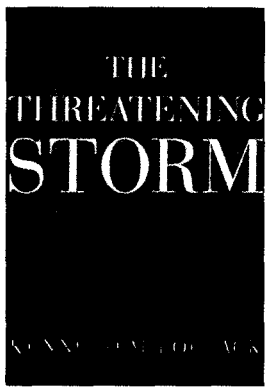

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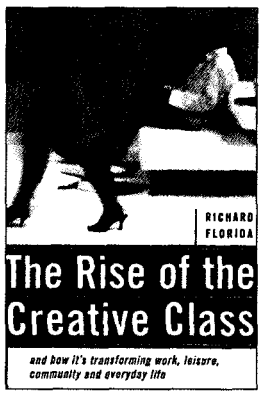

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